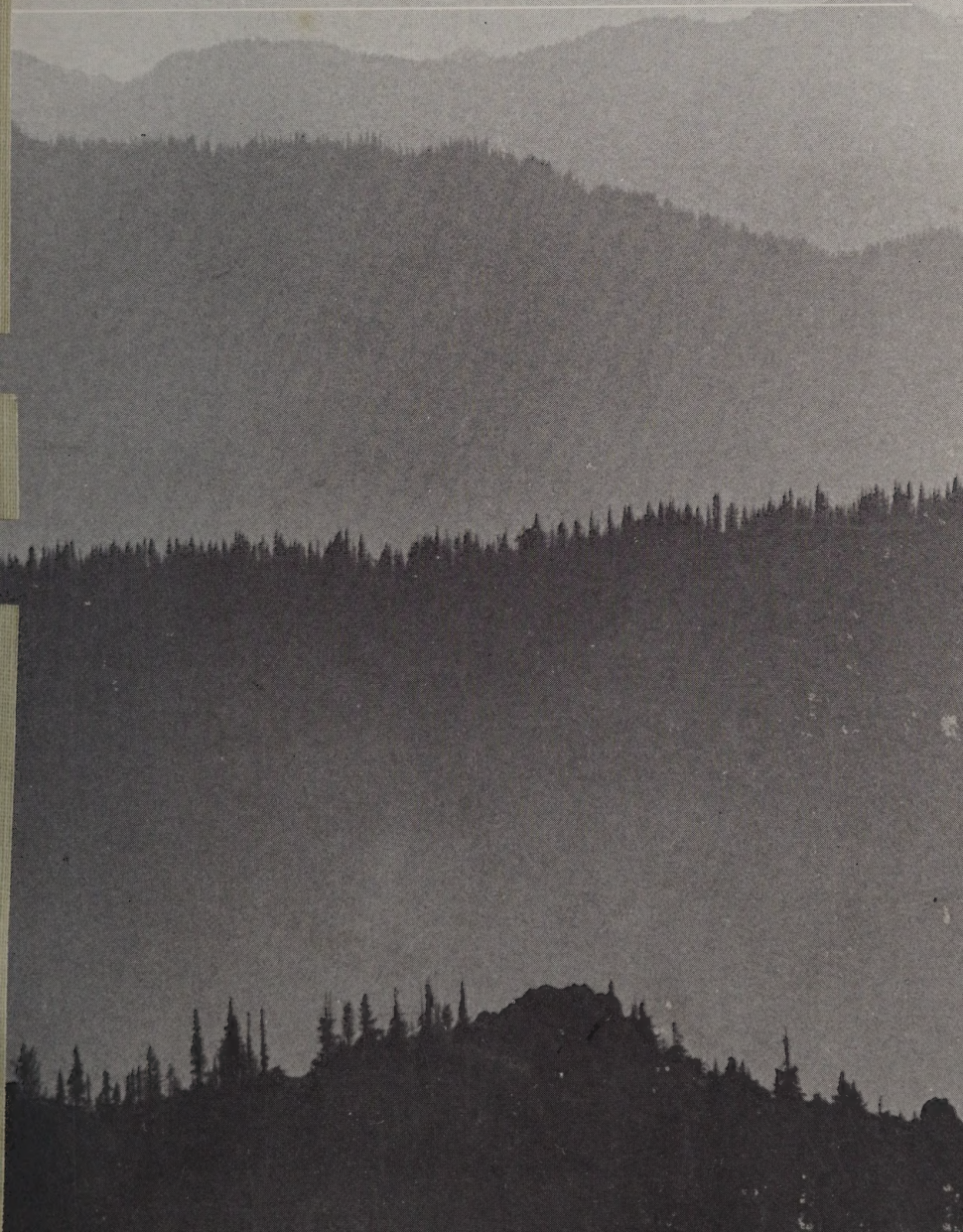
# FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

VOLUME 33/NO 10 OCTOBER 1982



Since 1949 the purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

# QUESTS

THE PERSON who drops out of society in order to go in search of something more durable has become a figure both familiar and acceptable to us since the 'sixties. He (or she) has grown into a type whom we can place and appreciate more easily than we do the disturbing type now coming into prominence — those militant young men or women who won't stop reciting the terrifying facts of nuclear armament or pointing out that once again in this country the faces of the poor are being ground by the elite and their friends in business.

Few of us are able to drop out personally. Most of us are limited to the vicarious sympathy to be obtained from biographies of Jack Kerouac, or Mother Teresa or the novels of Carlos Castaneda. This writer recently read Herrymon Maurer's *The Old Fellow* (The John Day Company, 1943), a novel about Lao Tzŭ , one of the comic highlights of which is a conversation between the venerable sage and his younger contemporary Confucius. Also, on the recommendation of a Chinese friend, who told me it would provide me with "background on India," I read Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha*, another fine novel, which retells the classic story of a man's search, namely, that of the Buddha himself.

This issue contains Francis Merchant's essay on the Buddha, but also many other references to man's inner searches, chiefly Angelo John Lewis' report on the Wilderness Vision Quest he underwent with its youthful leader Michael H. Brown. Even the visual features of the issue suggest the quest. Certainly the cover photo does, with its odd resemblance to a landscape painted on a scroll. And so does Mark Tobey's modern masterpiece, *Edge Of August,* the "calligraphic" style of which is a unique invention, combining one of the most ancient modes of expression with contemporary abstraction in order to arrive at meanings, or suggestions of meaning, beyond those of most pictures. Though a photograph, the centerspread view of the dome of Sacre Coeur in Paris suggests by its bold mixture of light and dark a perception of something realer than anything real. This reaching for meanings that cannot be put into words is, incidentally, one of the most characteristic aspects of contemporary art. It is also a trait of contemporary literature, to be found in one of the earliest landmarks of the century, Proust's *Remembrance Of Things Past*, which, partly because of its inclusion of so much in existence that is ineffable, remains probably the greatest novel of the century. Though the artists of previous eras sought these spiritual realms, they usually did so through forms provided by established religion. Only eccentrics like William Blake came anywhere near the strange, individual, and beautiful ventures that people are apt to find in their quests today. —P.G.

The opinions expressed in this issue are the authors and not necessarily those of the editors or of Fellowship in Prayer.

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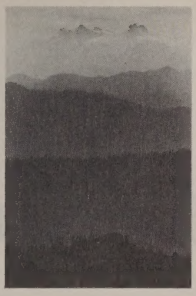

COVER PHOTO, by Carl G. Karsch, is of mountain ranges in the State of Washington receding from near to far, from darkest to lightest, like a Chinese scroll-painting.


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# Deliverance By Not

LIFE is full of problems for everyone. Students are apt to think that their teachers or leaders are immune from problems. They think that those who possess (or claim to possess) such a wonderful understanding of Truth can never meet with any problems at all. As a matter of fact, the only difference between teacher and student is that the former has greater problems and more searching experiences than the latter. But, of course, by tackling them at once, he, the teacher, is raised above them, so that the effect is that problems, difficulties and so-called frustrations raise him to higher things, and make greater attainment possible.

The trouble only too often with those who are less experienced is that they want to have their trouble removed: they are more interested in their deliverance than they are in their deliverer. Some used to write asking that we should work against their trouble. But the teaching of Jesus is the reverse of this. He said that we should become one with our Perfect Divine Center, after which a Divine adjustment would follow.

Consequently, if we put into practice the teaching of Jesus, we do not pray for our trouble or difficulty to be taken away. We stand in dire need of deliverance, but we do not pray for it. Instead, we devote our whole attention and energy to making contact with our Divine Center and Source. Directly a thought of our trouble tries to enter our mind, we ignore it and dismiss it. Then we turn our attention again to finding our Divine Center and God's inward peace.

We do not look for results. If we find ourselves thinking of such things,

by HENRY THOMAS HAMBLIN

# Praying For It

we at once dismiss the thought, and then turn our whole attention again to God's Center in the depth of our being.

Of course, at first we may not succeed in making contact. We try and try again, yet we may not find any peace or a feeling that God is alive in us. So we have to persevere. As a result of such perseverance we at last find God within, and continue to make contact.

We still refuse to look for results, for if we did so, we should not be following the teaching of Jesus that we should put the Kingdom of God first, and leave the results to Him. But, in spite of the fact that we do not look for results, we cannot help being aware of the fact that our trouble is still with us, and may even be increasing instead of becoming less.

And so we continue from day to day, making contact with our Divine Source; while the trouble continues and shows no sign of abatement. This is a test of our faith and also of our sincerity. But if we are faithful and persevering we at last reach the point where we think so much about God and our communion with Him, that our trouble is entirely forgotten. Indeed we have reached that stage where we do not care if the trouble never goes, we are so satisfied with God.

Then it seems as though a most gracious Presence draws near. We can feel Its warming and healing influence. Then we know that through not praying for it, deliverance has come to us. It has been added to us, even as Jesus promised.

(Reprinted from *Science of Thought Review*)

# Rich Soft Wanting

by DAVID GUNSTON

A tough will counts. So does desire.
So does a rich soft wanting.
Without rich wanting nothing arrives.

SO declared that most human of poets, Carl Sandburg, in *The People: Yes.* These eighteen words contain a great and profound truth.

We all "want" things, continually and ceaselessly. Do we really want them powerfully, richly enough to bring any hope of their being achieved in our lives? Equally importantly, are these things truly worth wanting in the first place? These are two hard questions to answer indeed, but ones we need to face squarely and honestly. For so much of our wanting is misdirected, or impoverished, or superficial, not springing from the deep, rich, soft core of our being.

In a sense, all life is a series of desirings. These may change a lot as the years pass, and something would be very wrong if they did not. But they remain the essential motive force by which our lives go forward. Even the person who says he has no unfulfilled wants, no unmet needs or ambitions, but who just asks to be left alone in peace, has in fact a deep, probably selfish and

certainly unrealistic "want" that can grow to suffocating proportions.

Our wants also perform great work within the divine creative purpose. Unless we are grievously warped mentally or emotionally, our fundamental, most reflected-upon desires usually lead us towards the Creator. After all, he planted these deep urges within us, he made us creatures who can only live by alternation between need and satisfaction. "Follow your longing", wrote Carl Jung, "and it will lead you to God." When we come to understand our wants and desires in the fullest context of our lives through the years, we tend to discover, sometimes rather to our surprise, that they involve God.

Our greatest need in this matter is for reflection, to discover what we really want and most fully believe in, what we long most to become part of our lives and to see ourselves allied to in the time we have on this earth. Such reflection, with the mind allowed to swing freely between contemplation and meditation and our whole being as relaxed as possible, enables us to allow to come to the surface what lies hidden beneath the general hour-by-hour run of our thoughts.

By periodically finding time for this sort of reflection we gain access to the deepest levels within our being. There lies the best of us. There at the deepest level lies a vast wealth of unexpended love, truth, and sincerity. Once we come face to face with those wants whose roots go deepest into our inner selves, we can resolve to give them a much more dominant place in our lives. If such a resolve is really achieved, then there is no doubt that life will unfold and open out and develop quite amazingly, bringing with it not only its own accompanying excitement but also a strangely reassuring sense of a certain rightness in life. Waiting and being still and pondering, so that our wants are redirected, will have brought their own rewards.

It would be foolish to pretend, however, that such clearness of vision is always and readily easy to enjoy. Surrounded by all that the world brings us, perhaps only saints can "see life steadily and see it whole." For most of us, life is a more fragmentary, disconnected, incomplete business, enigmatic to a degree and far from coherent, that such a clear cut view into our most innermost recesses is difficult to attain. Yet from time to time we are all startled and perhaps amazed by the deep thoughts that rise up from these self-same levels within us. We receive overwhelming convictions of the sheer goodness of life. Perhaps more often than we would readily admit we also receive a great sense of the power of love, and how its growth is the unqualified good point of life. From time to time profound and intensely joyful reassurances come welling up from the same source, too. All these serve to show us what lies within, and how close to the surface — at least at times — it may be, awaiting release.

Even the seemingly jumbled collections of fragments that so often make up our lives appear to be working of their own accord towards wholeness. Some of these fragments are enjoyments and pleasures, others are chores and problems more demanding than depressing. When we have worked through the latter, as we must, the deepened good achieved for ourselves is added to the general stock of good in our lives. So both kinds of fragments are unified and eventually enhance our overall awareness and conviction of the ultimate

goodness of things. The view of our true self and its deepest desires comes mostly when we are still and quiet, but it also occasionally arrives in puzzling experiences that may be fleeting in themselves but which leave with us a strange sense of inner joy. Therefore it must always be wise to look at and ponder all our experiences, whether of joy or sorrow or mere boredom, to see and know all we can. Relaxation is usually the quickest way to self-enlightenment.

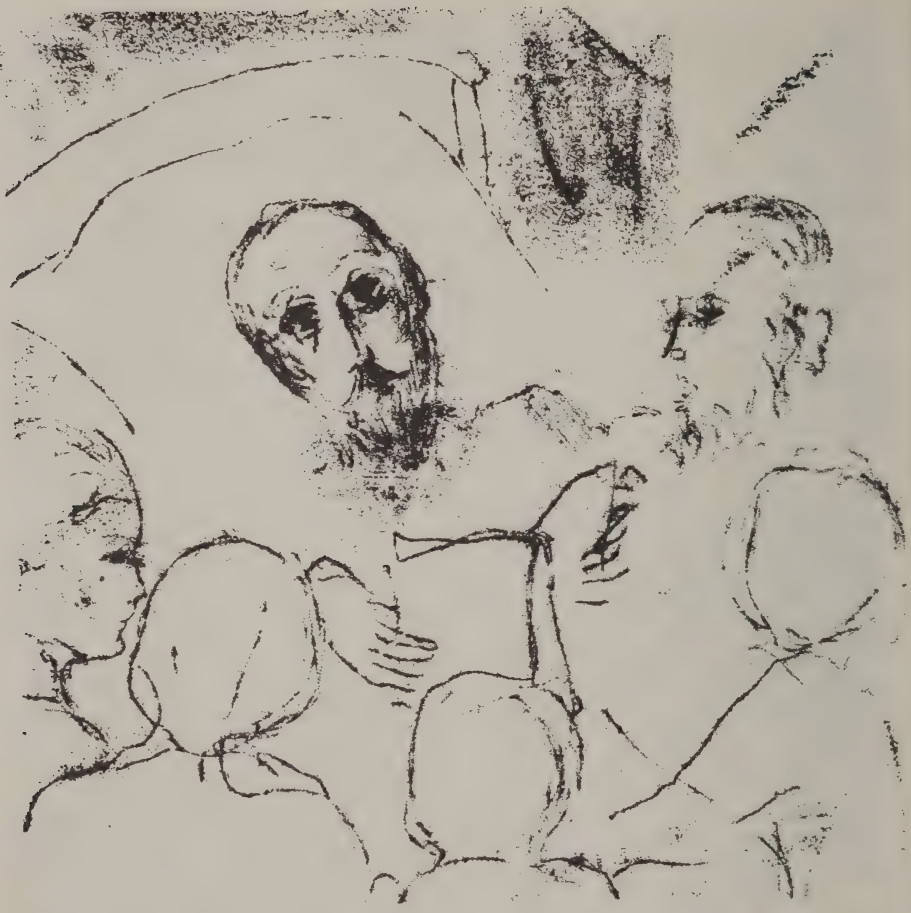
Although so much of our living is fragmentary and superficial, these evidences keep coming, by one route or another, if we allow them mental air and light. Very rarely is there a complete cutoff from our true self.

To be valid, our wants must also always lie within the framework of life as it is now, and not be linked to the vanished past. Now is reality, and any attempt to live in wanting to turn back the clock will inevitably be as unsatisfying as it is futile. This is especially so in times of bereavement or other great loss, for otherwise the final loss may be one of faith.

Our present everyday wants, those that beset us so relentlessly, may well be the surface expression of much deeper needs within us. In his richly thoughtful book *Friday Afternoon*, J. Neville Ward puts forward the interesting suggestion that modern society's insensate desire for more and more new material things could have a deeper significance, being at heart a spiritual matter and not just a blatant feature of modern materialism: "The primary motive may not be the enjoyment of the new thing but the desire to be rid of the old and too familiar thing, the need to expel what is felt to be used and impure and really so much waste. Things stand for other things. It is not impossible that some deep desire for cleansing, even some obscure cry for forgiveness and new life, struggles to express itself in these remote and uncongenial forms." Sometimes, beset by a sense of failure and waste when our real need is simply for love and loving, we try to make do with other things. The consumer society could well be just yearningly hungry for love and caring; goods, more and more of them, being its poor substitutes.

The basic truth about human wanting is that it does not sufficiently include love in the sense of a "heavenly energy," perhaps due to fear, losing heart, impatience, or a refusal to face maturity. As Simone Weil puts it in her *Waiting on God*: "There is a transcendent energy whose source is heaven, and this flows into us as soon as we wish for it. It is a real energy; it performs actions through the agency of our souls and of our bodies. We should ask for this food. At the moment of asking, and by the very fact that we ask for it, we know that God will give it to us."

Only by becoming fully familiar with the whole realm of our wanting can we expect to begin to understand ourselves. Soon we see our innate laziness in accepting superficial wants urged on us by outsiders, and the high price we have to pay for not bothering to find out who we are and what we really want. There is no need to settle for less, to cling to impoverished wanting, when we can choose Sandburg's "rich soft wanting", which reflects our deepest nature. The one only increases our yearning; the other works great things in prayer and in life itself.



# VIDOUI

A Story by VIOLET MENDELSOHN

"I BELIEVE in death," my father said quite suddenly. It was the morning he went back to the hospital for the last time, and I'd been sitting quietly by his bed, thinking that he was asleep.

"What do you mean, Papa?" I asked. His eyes were closed and he seemed not to hear me.

"Where, after all, is my own father? And mother? And their parents? Where are they?" He opened his eyes. "Ah, sweet daughter," he said in

Yiddish, "it's time."

"Time for what, Papa?" I was concerned that the tears I'd been trying to hold back would fall on his hands.

"Time to look on the facts," my father replied, motioning for me to help him to sit up. He picked up his small black skull-cap from the pillow, and centered it back over the white transparent fluff of hair, that, before all the chemotherapy, had been so thick and widow-peaked. Even his Van Dyke beard was now sparse as an oriental's. "And the main fact is," he said in his singsong Talmudic way, "there is very little time."

Out of habit, I was ready to deny it, but the look on his face told me that I mustn't. "What do you want to do, Papa?" I asked.

"There is a prayer," he explained, "a special prayer that if — no, when a person knows he's dying, it's a great privilege to say. Vidoui, it is called, and it means opening your heart to the Almighty — a confession of sins from a whole lifetime. Also" — his voice began to quiver — "it is an appeal for mercy and forgiveness." He stopped for a moment as though to organize his thoughts. "I want you to call my brother, and tell him to come at once with the prayer book. Then, call my sisters and tell them also to come quickly. May it please the good Lord," he murmured in Yiddish, "to grant me yet these few hours."

"What about Mama?" I asked. "How will we explain this to her?"

"Ah, Mama knows. And she will accept — just the way you are doing now." He lifted both my hands to his lips and kissed each one separately.

I hurried out, promising to make the calls, and to return as soon as possible with my mother.

In almost a year of watching my father suffer and wither, I don't think I really believed he would die. It was as though I had to hear it from him. He'd seemed indestructible, my father — his Mephistophelean good looks and authority apparent even now in his hollowed-out face. And still reflected in his eyes was all the wit, compassion, and tenderness, and the horse-thief guile.

I wondered if I should call both my brothers. My father hadn't asked me to, but perhaps that was because he was afraid they couldn't come in time. Or worse, that they might drop everything to fly to his side, and he'd go on living for a while yet. He was a proud and practical man, and always realistic where it concerned his "long-distance" sons. I concluded it would be best simply to follow his instructions, and did not telephone my brothers.

To save time, I decided just to call my aunts who lived together in Brooklyn, and then ask them to get in touch with my uncle. Only these two sisters, younger than my father, and my uncle, the eldest, survived the holocaust that claimed eight other brothers and sisters. Although we left Hungary, some years before, in 1931, both sisters remained utterly devoted to my father. He'd been the one, though only next to the eldest, who'd assumed the responsibility for their mother and all the younger children after their young father died. My uncle, whose eccentric and penurious nature had long since become legend in the family, was, as far as anyone knew, devoted only to money.

I'd been so out of touch with my aunts, I had forgotten how difficult it would be just to make myself understood. They insisted on speaking only in Yiddish, and though I understand it well enough, I have difficulty stammering out an intelligible sentence. When both, on separate telephone extensions, began to cry, I knew I'd communicated what I had to. "Come quickly," I concluded in English, "and call Uncle. Right away. Yes, and the prayer book. He must bring the prayer book."

My mother wrung her hands and protested bitterly. "No, no, call the doctor," she said. "Ask him to do something. He must do something." But my father had been right. She knew better. Gradually, she calmed down, and began to gather up the things she wanted to take with her — even stopping here and there, in her compulsive way, to tidy the house.

On his side, facing a window that overlooked the hospital parking area, my father was sobbing softly. I pretended not to notice, and hoped that, somehow, my mother hadn't.

She went over to his bed and began fluffing the pillows and smoothing the covers. A high-strung, self-absorbed woman, ten years younger than my father, she appeared, in her elegant clothes and upswept "silver-mink" rinsed hair, more assured than she was. Her behavior for the long, trying period of my father's illness had been providentially uncharacteristic. Perhaps for the first time in their forty-six year marriage, and all the more touching for its self-consciousness, she showed concern — indeed, genuine affection for my father, controlling her own panic in order to tend to his needs.

"What kind of foolishness about a family gathering?" she asked with exaggerated brusqueness. "How could such a smart man be so foolish?"

A nurse came in with some pills, but my father waved her away. "Please," he said, "there's no pain now, and I must think clear." Then, turning anxiously to me, "You made the calls? They're coming soon?"

"Yes, yes, Papa dear. Why don't you rest now, until they come?" He looked terribly frail and weary.

Knowing nothing so well as how to grieve, my aunts arrived — their lamentations preceding them into the room. Barely nodding to my mother and me, they headed directly for my father. Each in turn flung herself into his outstretched arms. Wearing the characteristic drab, brown, unstyled matron's wigs of Orthodox Jewish women, they looked like twins, except one was tall and thin, and the other short and plump. But their features, set amid a network of deep wrinkles, were very much alike; prominent myopic eyes behind thick lensed glasses, short hooked nose, and tight, pale, pursed lips.

"It's not true, it's not true," they wailed, dabbing at their eyes with handkerchiefs already moist and limp.

"Sisters, sisters," my father gently scolded. "Let us not waste precious time. There's so much to say. . .I don't know where to begin. We've had some arguments in the past — misunderstandings. For whatever reason I may have hurt you, forgive me; please forgive me. I ask you also" — he looked at each of us separately — "to forgive and love one another. And to help each other. And toward our brother" — he addressed just his sisters — "you must be

especially. . ." He interrupted himself abruptly, "Why isn't he here yet? Could it be that he's so stingy he's walking here from Brooklyn?" He was silent for a while, and the room became strangely hushed. Then, clasping his hands together, he began to moan, "Oh my God, I'm afraid, I'm so afraid. I have not been righteous enough, or pious enough. Oh Lord, I have sinned."

My mother ran to his side. "Listen to how he's talking," she cried. "You've been good. Too good, sometimes. God knows, and we know." She turned to my aunts for confirmation.

"A jewel," said one.

"A saint," added the other.

I joined the other women around his bed. "I love you Papa," I said.

My father sighed contentedly, lay back, and closed his eyes. But in a few minutes, he sat up again, and looked anxiously around the room.

"Where is he? Where's my brother?" he demanded.

"Soon, he'll be here soon," one of my aunts said, "lay your head back and rest."

But my father could no longer relax. He took his watch from the top of the night-table and began to look at it every few minutes.

"The old fool," he muttered into his pillow. "Probably still chasing after the dollar. It would serve him right if he were too late."

I'd also become anxious. It was getting close to the hospital dinner hour.

By the time my uncle arrived, my father had fallen asleep. Mumbling something about taking the wrong train, my uncle tiptoed in, his bent but well shined, high laced shoes squeaking. A black velour hat set off his full white beard and sidelocks, and against his long frock-coat, he clutched a small, neatly wrapped brown paper package.

As though on signal, my father awakened. With great effort, he pulled himself up on the pillow, looked at his watch, and began shaking a fist at my uncle. "Scoundrel!" he rasped. "Just how long do you expect a person to go on dying?"

"Peace, peace, dear brother," my uncle begged. And he kissed my father on his forehead.

My father began to cry, and reached out for my uncle. They embraced. "Yes, yes, peace," he said as the tears subsided. "The Vidoui — you brought it?" he asked.

My uncle nodded, picked up the prayerbook, and opened it to a page marked with a blue satin ribbon.

"Read it, brother," my father said, adjusting his skull-cap, and folding his trembling hands in front of him. "I will recite after you."

Amid a chorus of muted sobs, and the clatter of dinner trays in the corridor, my uncle began to intone:

"Oh lord my God, and God of my fathers,
Accept my prayer, do not ignore my supplication.
Forgive me for all the sins I have committed in my lifetime. . ."

Two days later my father died. The doctor said it had happened peacefully — in his sleep.

# Ordination of a Buddhist Monk

FOR THE *NAHK* — the aspiring monk — the entrance into the monastic world begins with a procession around the *Wat* or temple *(see photo below).* The first time around is to commemorate the Lord Buddha; the second time is for the *Phratum* or Buddhist laws; the third time is for the *Sanga* or monastic order. For the aspirant, they are the only important and pure things which he will need in his new life.

After receiving the saffron robe, and being separated from his family and friends, the aspirant is asked questions on Buddhist scripture which he must answer satisfactorily. He is then read the 227 laws that will govern his life as a monk *(see photo on opposite page).*

Finally, with the questions answered and his responsibilities accepted, the ceremony ends and his new life as a Buddhist monk begins.

— DENNIS MESEROLL

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Sackler Collections

## THE WORLD'S PHYSICIAN

# The Buddha

by FRANCIS MERCHANT

THE CONDITION OF MAN down the ages is shot through with paradox. Although most people long for peace, devastating wars break out with persistent regularity. Those who reach for happiness, in most cases, find themselves clutching a handful of ashes. Rushing after beckoning pleasure, men enter the House of Pain and Suffering. Eagerly striving for position and possessions, men are alternately hurled aloft and cast down in endless succession. Cut down by time, bludgeoned by pain, and threatened by the ever-present shadow of death, they wander through life haphazardly, unaware of origin or destination. Driven by impelling desire, they chase rainbows and fall into quagmires.

All this being so, how does the Buddhist respond?

He says, "The whole world of living beings I must rescue from the terrors of birth, of old age, of sickness, of death and rebirth, of all kinds of moral offense, of all states of woe, of the concommittants of ignorance . . . . I will help all beings to freedom, in all states of woe that may be found in any world system whatsoever."

Such a resolve is surely a great-hearted response to the condition of man. By what method, one asks, is this highly desirable consummation to be achieved? The answer lies in the teachings of the Buddha.

**Background.** Born as a prince, Siddhartha Gautama, the future Buddha, grew up in an atmosphere of opulence and luxury. His life was carefree and merry. Eventually, of course, he learned the truth, namely, that human beings are subject to sickness, old age, and death. This discovery prompted him to embark upon a most meaningful quest. He left his pleasant surroundings, bade his wife adieu, and lived the life of an ascetic. He practiced severe

austerities and meditated with ardor.

In due time he came to the conclusion that the saving truth would not come through asceticism, however rigorous. Worn out and emaciated by his austerities, he sat under a Bo tree and pondered. At this point, enlightenment came. The basic concepts of his world-view took shape. He formulated the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path that leads to liberation.

*The First Truth.* Suffering is the dominant characteristic of the human condition. Physical ailments rack the body; old age brings a variety of disabilities; death destroys the physical vehicle. To this we may add mental anguish, frustration, disappointment, despair, anxiety, and dejection.

*The Second Truth.* The cause of pain is traceable to craving or attachment. The fabric of man's unhappiness is woven from the varied threads of his greed and desire. The craving for passion, for pleasure, for wealth, for self-aggrandizement yields fruit whose taste is bitter.

*The Third Truth.* When craving ceases, so does suffering. Desire produces attachment, and attachment brings suffering in its wake. Each person ordinarily makes demands on life, thus asserting his own predilections. Detachment involves a refusal to project one's preferences on the universe.

*The Fourth Truth.* The overcoming of suffering can be brought about by disciplines that define an Eightfold Path: 1) right understanding, 2) right aspiration, 3) right speech, 4) right conduct, 5) right vocation, 6) right effort, 7) right alertness, 8) right concentration. In other words, the nature of the quest must be rightly understood: aspiration must give wings to the intention; speech must be ruled by thought; conduct must reflect the inner purpose; the vocation chosen must not stain inner integrity; persistent effort must characterize striving; alertness must be cultivated to avoid unsuspected pitfalls; and the spiritual focus must be maintained by concentration.

The acceptance of these recognitions and disciplines has led Buddhists to the inner peace and serenity that flow from the extinction of desire. Those who attain — cross the stream, as it is said — have an obligation to enlighten their less fortunate brothers.

Three stages may be distinguished. In the first, the individual is the prisoner of his misconceptions, mistaking the unreal for the real. Like a spider, he spins a web and evaluates the world in terms of its limitations. The second stage is reached when he disciplines the mind, destroys the shackles of desire, and achieves the inner peace that is a foretaste of Nirvana. In the third, he comprehends that he is not separate from humanity, but an inalienable part of the human race and is bound by compassion to lift all beings to a nobler level of spiritual awareness. Having achieved enlightenment, he must engage in the arduous task of helping to free the prisoners of the planet from their self-imposed sufferings.

**Distinctive Features.** There is no caste in Buddhism, nor are there gods to worship or propitiate. All human beings are in the same predicament, and each one must exert himself strenuously to tread the path of liberation. The Teaching is presented to all — rich and poor, king and commoner, scholar and

servant — but never imposed. Buddhism never engaged in wars to propagate the faith. Those who are content to remain enmeshed in the ignorance that produces inevitable suffering are exhorted, but never coerced.

Buddhism does not put forth a set of theological principles, acceptance of which automatically ensures salvation or enlightenment. It emphasizes a primary realization in regard to the nature of man's dilemma and prescribes a self-transforming code of conduct.

The beliefs of a Buddhist find expression in the common affairs of life. He is "tolerant among the intolerant, mild among the violent, and free from greed among the greedy."

The basic conception of Buddhism is radical and unconventional. The natural man following the prompting of his desires, is predestined to misery. He will reach for wealth, power, and pleasure. Like the ocean wave, every crest will be followed by a trough. Hatred, anger, and greed are natural enough, yet spirit-destroying. Liberation comes through the mind, for it is the formulator of values and the governor of conduct.

The whole purpose of Buddhism is to create the hero of humanity, the *Bodhisattva.* Having overcome the grief-causing illusions of this world, he remains among men in order to be a lamp of the Law, a sun of compassion, a befriender of all humanity. "Like a fire, his mind constantly blazes up into good works for others." Even in his solitude his beneficent thought encircles the globe.

**Impermanence.** All things change — the seed becomes the flower, summer passes into winter; the robust youth is transformed by time into the feeble old man who eventually vanishes from the face of the earth. All men know this, but all too few ponder on the meaning to be extracted from these common observations.

Nothing really is, inasmuch as all is becoming. The world about us, forever changing, does not reveal the reality of being. The spectacle revealed to us by the senses is a magic show, a realm of effects arising from causes that are unknown. From this standpoint, man is seen as a fluttering leaf capriciously blown about by the winds of circumstance. Diminished by time and cut down by death, he wanders through life, deluded by multiform illusions.

The Buddhist moves along a different path. Every man, he declares, has the Buddha-nature concealed in the depths of his being, but can never find it as long as he allows himself to be governed by his instinctive urges and sense-longings. Refusing to become the pawn of impelling desire, he can reach for a higher density and gain a realization of the unity that lies behind the shadows of diversity.

By overcoming the gravitational pull of materially-oriented desires, he can cross the stream of becoming and establish himself in the realm of being — that is, Nirvana. "Let a wise man blow off the impurities of himself, as a smith blows off the impurities of silver, one by one, little by little, and from moment to moment." In this way he will use the impermanent world to serve a nobler purpose.

**Ethical Prescriptions.** Natural tendencies, given free rein, can lead to endless suffering, not only in this incarnation, but in successive rebirths. Only self-exertion can produce a different result. The tendency to drift with the currents of the age must be checked. Ethical values must be wrought into the very fabric of consciousness. "As rain breaks through an ill-thatched house, passion will break through an unreflecting mind."

"Hatred does not cease by hatred at any time, hatred ceases by love — this is an eternal law." The expression of this principle is far more difficult in practice than in theory.

"Let a man leave anger, let him forsake pride, let him overcome all bondage!" Natural tendencies must be examined, and, if they impede spiritual progress, be rejected.

The Buddhist is persistently engaged in diminishing his vices and strengthening his virtues. He considers patience "the highest penance," earnestness "a jewel." Forsaking "passion and hatred and foolishness," he is "attached to nothing in the world."

Such rules of conduct, if followed, mold character. They involve the transformation of ordinary human nature and the creation of a highly ethical human being. This is the soil out of which Buddhahood flowers. Unless the disciple overcomes his weaknesses, he cannot give strength to others.

**Taming The Mind.** The wandering mind, like a butterfly, moves from one subject to another, gathering impressions rather than ideas. Left to itself, it flits hither and yon in aimless succession. Therefore it is said, "It is good to tame the mind, which is difficult to hold in, and flighty, rushing wherever it lists; a tamed mind brings happiness." Failure to keep the mind in check has serious consequences. "Whatever a hater may do to a hater, or an enemy to an enemy, a wrongly-directed mind will do us greater mischief."

Meditation is a method of curbing the mind and channeling its energies. Buddhist themes for pondering are varied. The disciple meditates, for example, on what has been termed "the vanity of human wishes," that is, the innumerable ways in which countless persons have sought peace of mind without finding it. "From pleasure comes grief, from pleasure comes fear; he who is free from pleasure knows neither grief nor fear." The same may be said of lust, desire, and craving.

Some Buddhists have been known to frequent graveyards in order to ponder on the predestined fate of the body and the unwisdom of being attached to its cravings and longings. It is surely an appropriate place to gain a different and contrasting perspective on the nature of the human experience. Each tombstone holds the story of what someone did with the gift of life. The impermanence of things is attested by the dust that was once animated by the mysterious essence called life.

Another theme for meditation concerns the virtues that the Buddhist wishes to build into his consciousness — the earnestness and the patience needed to gain victory over the wayward self; the inclusive sense of compassion that

should characterize one who seeks to benefit mankind.

The Buddha suggested a meaningful meditation to a householder who said, "I am decrepit, Lord, old, aged, advanced in years and life: I have reached my span of life, ill in body and constantly ailing." The Buddha advised him to train himself to think that "though I am ill in body, my mind shall not be ill." The householder required further explanation. He was told, "The disciple does not look upon his body as his self, not his feelings, nor his consciousness, because all these change, and from such change arises grief, pain, and delusion." As to the real nature of the self, that is a subject for extended meditation.

The *Bhikshu*, or monk, ponders on the qualities that find expression in the consciousness of a Bodhisattva.

Although he enjoys solitude, the *Arhat,* or dedicated disciple, does not consider himself cut off or isolated from the rest of the human race. He employs his thought as though it were a tangible energy and sends it forth to the four quarters of the globe, charged with peace and goodwill. As it is written: "Let all-embracing thoughts for all that lives be thine — an all-embracing love for all the universe in its heights and depths and breadth, unstinted love, unmarred by hate within, not rousing enmity."

**Nirvana and Reality.** The meaning of *Nirvana* has been the subject of much dispute and controversy. The word points to a state of awareness in which all duality is non-existent. From the point of view of persons involved in this world of opposites or polarities, Nirvana is nothingness. But such a definition results from a limited perspective. It is a state of livingness so different from ordinary cognition that it is indescribable. It can therefore be spoken about only in paradoxical terms like "unborn, not made, uncompounded."

The striving of the Buddhist, it would seem, leads to what is inexpressible and ineffable. Trying to define what is by definition indefinable produces further paradoxes. "Since everything is relative," says Nagarjuna, "we do not know what is finite and what is infinite, what signifies finite and infinite at once, what signifies negation of both issues."

If the goal is to become a Bodhisattva instead of to reach Nirvana, the subtleties of philosophical analysis are diminshed. The means of achieving enlightenment are then emphasized rather than the mystical state that prevails after enlightenment has been attained.

**Stories of the Buddha.** A man came to the Buddha and heaped a shower of abuse on him. After listening for a while, Gautama said, "If a gift is not accepted, to whom does it return?" The man paused in his tirade and answered, "Why, to the sender." "Very well, then," replied the Buddha, "I do not accept your gift of abuse."

Another story relates to a woman who became distraught because her son had died. She was brokenhearted and mentally unbalanced by her sorrow. When she came to the Buddha, he observed her distressed condition and said, "Go into the city, making the rounds of the entire city, beginning at the begin-

ning, and in whatever house no one has ever died, from that house fetch tiny grains of mustard seed." She went from place to place, but could find no family that had not been visited by death. Slowly she began to realize that she was not alone in her grief, but that she was experiencing a deprivation common to the human race. She understood then what the Buddha had in mind when he suggested that she obtain grains of mustard seed from houses where death had never been a visitor. Restored in mind, she returned to the Buddha and asked to be taught.

The Buddha adapted the Teaching to the capacities of his hearers. This flexibility of method is illustrated in the parable of the burning house.

A certain man lived with his children in a large house. One day, as he was about to enter, he observed billowing smoke coming out of the roof. Alarmed for the safety of his children, he called to them. They were so engrossed in play that they paid no attention to his urgent shouts. Wishing to save them, he thought of an expedient. He told them that he had wonderful toys for them if they would only leave the burning dwelling. Eager to enjoy the promised playtoys, the children came forth. The old man was as good as his word, and gave the children fancy toys with jingling bells and streaming ribbons. Analogously, the Teaching is presented in ways that will best persuade men to leave the conflagration of this world's selfishness.

**Wanderings of Buddhism.** Buddhism, a non-aggressive, non-fanatical religion, was driven out of India. It found adherents, however, in other countries. Strangely enough, its ideals and emphases were altered in its wanderings. In Burma, Ceylon, and Thailand an offshoot called Theravada Buddhism developed. Those who followed this teaching held that the attainment of liberation by the individual was itself of major dimensions, fraught with beneficent meaning for the entire human race. The Bodhisattva ideal, therefore, was not emphasized.

In China, the teaching of the Buddha underwent significant changes. It developed into Ch'an, or Zen, emphasizing sudden enlightenment rather than good works and scriptural study. Another form, Pure Land Buddhism, stressed faith in the Buddha of Boundless Light, and salvation by calling on his name. Japan continued the traditions of Chinese Buddhism.

In Tibet, the Bodhisattva ideal was greatly honored. This form became known as Mahayana Buddhism.

**Conclusion.** The farewell address of the Buddha shortly before his death conveys the spirit of the Teaching he gave humanity: "I am now grown old and full of years; my journey is drawing to its close; I have reached the sum of my days, I am turning eighty years of age. Be ye lamps unto yourselves. Rely on yourself, and do not rely on external help. Hold fast to the truth as a lamp. Seek salvation alone in the truth. My age is now full ripe, my life draws to its close. I leave you, I depart, relying on myself alone! Be earnest, then, O brethren, holy, full of thought! Be steadfast in resolve! Keep watch over your own hearts! Who wearies not, but holds fast to his truth and law, shall cross this sea of life, shall make an end of grief."

# GOODWILL TO ALL MANKIND

## THE GREAT INVOCATION

From the point of light within the Mind of God
Let light stream forth into the minds of men.
Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the Heart of God
Let love stream into the hearts of men.
May Christ return to Earth.

From the centre where the Will of God is known
Let purpose guide the little wills of men —
The purpose which the Masters know and serve.

From the centre which we call the race of men
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out
And may it seal the door where evil dwells.

Let Light and Love and Power restore the
Plan on Earth.

*Card copies of this invocation are available from:*
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# In Search of VISION

## A WILDERNESS JOURNAL

by ANGELO JOHN LEWIS

*"I am he who puts together, he who speaks, he who searches, says. I am he who looks for the spirit of the day, says. I search where there is fright and terror. I am he who fixes, he who cures the person that is sick . . . . I am he who resolves all, says. Truly, you are man enough to resolve the truth. You are he who puts together and resolves. You are he who speaks with the light of day. You are he who speaks with terror."*

— Henry Munn, THE MUSHROOMS OF LANGUAGE

*"This quest is modeled on native American vision quest rituals. During those experiences, the initiate would take no food, water, or equipment at all, and enter nature in order to have an authentic spiritual experience: to search for a spirit, protecting totem, or a vision of transformation of some kind."*

— Michael H. Brown, WILDERNESS VISION QUEST

The Setting. It is late May in Virginia and has already been raining for a day and a half. Following a trail that began with reading an ad in a magazine about a "wilderness vision quest," I stepped off the train into the night. My frameless backpack weighed a good forty pounds or so. I had eaten my last solid meal for the coming seven days (unless nuts and dried fruit can be considered solid foor.) A day-old growth of hair was on my face. It was the first Sunday I had spent for several months without the company of *The New York Times.* I felt anxious to leave the world behind, to purify myself, to renew myself for the summer.

The ad for the quest promised an intimate encounter with nature and the self, an "initiation into higher states of consciousness" during seven days of backpacking and camping in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. Techniques of transformation included semi-fasting (four pounds of food for six or seven days), chanting and singing, symbolic artwork, mandala drawing, journal writing, meditation. The guide was transpersonal therapist Michael H. Brown, a workshop leader with experience in psychosynthesis, psychedelic psychotherapy, and altered states of consciousness. Brown, according to the ad, "has had ritual and ceremonial experiences with the Huichol Indians from north central Mexico" and other native Americans.

What follows are excerpts from the journal I kept during and after the

quest. Names, save those of myself and Brown, have been changed for the sake of privacy. My name is Angelo John Lewis. I am thin, tall, brown, and wiry. I have not visited any wilderness except suburbia for several years . . . .

*"All my patterns are behind me, fears and worries that do blind me / To the mystery and the miracle of life. / The mosquitoes and the flies, all the insects buzzing by / Do, through their vibrations, sing the praises of the Lord!"* — Michael H. Brown.

Point of Entry. Carlos Castenada's Don Juan told his charge that the first task of the warrier is learning to stop the internal dialogue — the chatter that goes on in one's head — and to listen to the beauty and mystery of the outer world. This was my first purpose in coming to the wilderness. My second was to become more connected with nature. I have lived in more cities than I can name: Atlanta, Philadelphia, Boston, London are a few. But when it comes to the self-reliance learned from living on the land, I'm a know-nothing, a child of technology, color TV, hot tubs and saunas. I haven't slept out-of-doors since I was in the Boy Scouts. I don't know how to pitch a tent or start a fire . . . .

The Others. At Michael Brown's house, outside of Charlottesville, there are eight of us, including Michael himself: five women and three men. I learn from them that this is a "graduate quest," meaning that all except two of us have gone through this experience before, some twice. By the second day, my impressions of everyone have firmed into near-stereotypes.

The other male, besides Michael and myself, is Matthew: tall, heavy-set, and thoughtful. "Have you gone through any of these 'growth experiences' before?" he asks me before we hit the trail. We compare experiences, times, places. He says, "There always are more women than men at these kinds of things."

Then there's Laureen. At twenty-one, she's the youngest of the group and a fellow first-timer. She's fluid, with a great sense of humor and occasional strong needs of privacy. I find her enrapturing in her quiet way.

There's Diane, one of those people who are always late and unprepared. She's very earnest, somewhat neurotic, and finds her balance through art.

T.K. is a bit older than most of us and decidedly a real lady. The day before questing found her in high heels and a long, flowing, exquisitely patterned skirt. Just recently, she will soon be telling us, she and her children underwent a painful separation.

Next is Renee, who appears painfully shy, even mysterious. She is a graduate of two quests and eager to begin a third.

And Madelyn: older, rather mannish, outdoorsy and competent — Nautilus-trained.

And finally Michael: clear, light, gentle earth-spirit, an American Indian in a Caucasian body.

*"Keep playin' those mind games forever."* — John Lennon, MIND GAMES

A Process. It is the first full day. Although the sky is clear, the weather is threatening. Michael is perturbed because his expensive boots seem not to resist water. He has to go to town to confront the merchant who sold them to him. Before he leaves, he gives us a process to perform.

He instructs us to pick partners. I find myself with the shy Renee. Partner A is told to ask partner B the same question over and over again: "Why did you come on the quest?"

My answers include, "to become more connected with nature," "to see visions," and "to contact my spirit guides."

We are then told to choose the three that seem the most meaningful. I settle on "to open fully to the beauty and mystery of nature and creation," "to slow down," and "to receive guidance."

As Michael leaves for town, he asks us to expand on the three we have chosen. About my first, I write: "Without knowing nature, it probably is difficult to know God. God's signature is on every blade of grass, every tree, every rock, every clump of earth. I want to know more about nature and expand to the point that the spirit guides of nature are comfortable enough with me to reveal themselves. I want to experience the *Shakti* and power of the earth."

About the second: "All my life it seems I've moved at a Madison Avenue pace, afraid, it seems, that unless I go full-steam-ahead I'll never be able to get anything done. When I allow myself to move at a more natural pace, I have more poise, inner security, and self-worth, I am more easily in spirit's time, without a breath of anxiety in my body."

The Trail. Backpacks on at last. Twenty-six miles up a well-maintained trail to Crabtree Meadows in George Washington National Forest. As we approach the falls, signs tell us of peril — of the fourteen people who slipped too close to the falls and perished. "The falls," says one sign, "beautiful to behold, perilous to explore."

At an easy pace, we dissolve into nature, into mystery, into creation. Sayeth the Gospel According to Michael Brown: "As we enter into the wilderness, we are overwhelmed by the silence. The activities of daily life are behind us, as are the normal references to time. Slowly we unwind."

After a few hours, we arrive at the top. We walk across a clear stream into a clearing. Mist shrouds the peaks of the Blue Ridge. We find sites to pitch our tents in. I instantly feel my "cityness". I go to Madelyn, who has her tent up already, and she explains what "the fly" is, where to put the poles, etc.

Pitched to face the mountains, my tent is a womb away from the elements, the bugs, the mosquitoes, the others. It is a place to rest my pack and my body. Here, up above the world.

Provisions. Michael has allowed us four pounds of food apiece. I have a pound of very sharp cheddar, a half-pound of unyeasted bread, a pound of mixed nuts roasted in soy sauce, three-quarters of a pound of Brazil nuts, raisins and dried fruit. I am allowing myself to eat only when hungry. "One of

the ways we stay unconscious," sayeth the Gospel According to Michael Brown, "is by eating far too much. We eat when we're nervous. We eat when we're sad, angry, lonely, afraid. We eat so as not to experience the intensity and fullness of our lives."

The Routine. Usually we awake to the sound of Michael playing his recorder. We do yoga in a circle and then, with hands joined, meditate. We then open our eyes and tell each other what we're going through. Here is where worldly cares become apparent: T.K. has no place to live, Laureen is sometimes suicidal, Renee wants to complete a primal scream she started during her last quest. These are the fabrics with which we structure our worlds.

After sharing, there is some free time, some hiking, then some processing. When processing, we use a "power object," a ritual item that the group accepts as focalizing tool. When a person holds the power object, he or she has the group's undivided attention and can entertain discussion or end it as he or she chooses.

Tools of Discovery. After meditation, we are frequently asked to depict our inner state in a mandala drawn in a circle. We are then asked to interpret our mandalas for the group and listen to the feedback others have to give us. My drawings look like a child's. They are distinctly otherworldly, even ethereal. It is apparent that I am the least artistically accomplished of the group. But I understand that it's the process, not the finished drawing that is important. Nevertheless, it takes considerable time before I am comfortable with my drawings.

Also, Michael has collected a number of ritual chants. Through chanting them — somewhat in the manner of singing rounds — we shake off some of the psychological dust and intellectualization that has gathered on us. Our faces grow relaxed. We come out of ourselves.

Dancing On the Edge. The teacher teaches because he must, because that is a necessary requisite for mastery. This seems clear from what Michael says. "I'm very glad," he is saying now, "to have made it through this long, dark, bleak winter. This winter I doubted I'd survive at all. These trainings are my life, nothing more, nothing less. When I come into the woods with you, I allow myself to be put on the edge — the edge of growth. I allow all my fears and anxieties to come to the surface so that I might open myself to you in a human and risky way."

As Michael talks, I think about an interview I read with Musician Keith Jarrett. Jarrett talked about his technique — how, for his concerts, he emptied his mind of thoughts so that, thanks to his "being on the edge," new music would pour through him . . . . I know I, too, am dancing on the edge, collecting nothing, living from day to day. I had abandoned my job because I wanted to live on the edge of my experience. Here in the woods, free from anxiety, I feel my courage, my uniqueness, my faith. By living like a warrior and opening up to the Greater Will, I find myself and seeing new perspectives . . . .

"Ask yourself one question," said Castenada's Don Juan. "Does this path have a heart? If it does, then it is good. If it doesn't, then it is of no use." I thank all creation that I have discovered a path with a heart.

Wilderness Voices. It is night, and Matthew and I are talking. The relative silence of the night is suddenly interrupted by a haunting and alien sound. Then silence, then the sound again, then silence again. Each time we hear the sound, it is closer. "Let's go investigate," says Matthew. We get our flashlights and walk into the woods.

In the underbrush, our flashlights reveal the object of our attention: two alien eyes shining in the night in front of us. It's probably a fox. Like all animals, he is attracted to man, yet afraid of his violence.

"Do you want to go after him?" Matthew asks.

"No, let's leave him alone," I said. And we did.

Georgia To Maine. It's the third (or fourth?) day, and we pack up our gear and hike up to The Priest, the highest point of this part of the Blue Ridge, 4,100 feet. Near The Priest, there's a shelter in which, after loading in my belongings, I discover a log in which travelers sign their names: "Mad Dog Jones," "The Trucker," "B & B." All of them are hiking from Georgia to Maine this summer. They are, I muse, the true questers. Compared to them, we are just weekend travelers, voyagers of the short haul. We meet a young woman on the trail who's going north. "Why do you do it?" we ask her. "For the adventure," she says.

Michael attempts to explain to her what we're doing: getting in touch with the land, listening to the rhythms inside ourselves. "You're going to do all that in *one week*?" she asks, disbelieving. "You'd be surprised," Michael replies. "We seek to travel the inner distances."

Michael's Story. The next day, Michael tells us his story. He had gone to California, to the Essalen Institute, the grandmother of transformational, psychological schools. But he was dissatisfied with all the talk there. So, when someone told him about the quest experience, he took off into the mountains around Big Sur. While there, he had a vision and changed his name to Rising Eagle. He kept the name for a year, though a lot of his colleagues had difficulty accepting it. Then, about the time he and they had gotten used to it, he got another message telling him it was time to give it up and become Michael H. Brown again. Since then, he has conducted twenty-two wilderness vision quests.

"Fascinations." Michael shared a process called "Fascinations" with us. Our first task was to list all the things that had fascinated us in the course of this journey, then to narrow them down to the top three. For me these were: seeing Diane's aura in Technicolor on the third day, discovering the Appalachian Trail, and getting a symbol of my inner self during one of Michael's processes.

Michael then asked us which of the three was the one that mattered most.

This, for me, was the last — the symbol of my inner self which I had first seen during meditation after a breathing and hypnotic process. The symbol turned out to be an eagle. To me an eagle is a creature who roams the high places in search of truth, who does not crave company, and who sings, softly, to himself.

Michael asked us to question the symbol for any message it might have. This is what I received: "Be patient now, allow things to come to you, open yourself to receive abundance, and walk with quietness and care . . . ."

A Sharing. Later, as rain poured, we sat under the shelter and talked. I was reminded of a line in a poem by Lenore K.: "They told me all of their secrets, and I told them nothing." It was my turn to speak. I told everyone that, although I felt fine, I did not like my symbolic representation of the eagle.

"But I *like* your drawing," T.K. said, "precisely because it's so *bad*! It's as if you're revealing a fragile, delicate part of yourself that you usually don't show!"

Alone Day. We are back at Crabtree Meadows. It's morning and time for Alone Day — twenty-four hours of solitude on the land, away from others. I packed my tent and wound my way up a mountain path. After walking for three hours, I pitched my tent on a slope. I walked a great deal and wrote two poems. One was a prose poem in celebration of an experience I had during meditation. The second poem was "For The Others:"

*They want me to come from my most delicate places,*
*From the parts that are most fragile and least refined.*

*They want to hear from where I'm human,*
*From the tender places, protected and well-concealed.*

*They would like to know me where none have known me,*
*Where no lover has come, nor mother nourished.*

*These are the ones who reveal everything, yet ask nothing.*
*These are the friends I meet these days on the road . . . .*

Re-Entry. We climb down the falls on the last day. I am feeling curiously light. When we get to Michael's house, I notice I weigh 130 pounds. My six-day beard is itching insanely. I shower and shave it off. We eat a cooked meal, and I weigh myself again and find I am up to 135 pounds. I am anxious to get home.

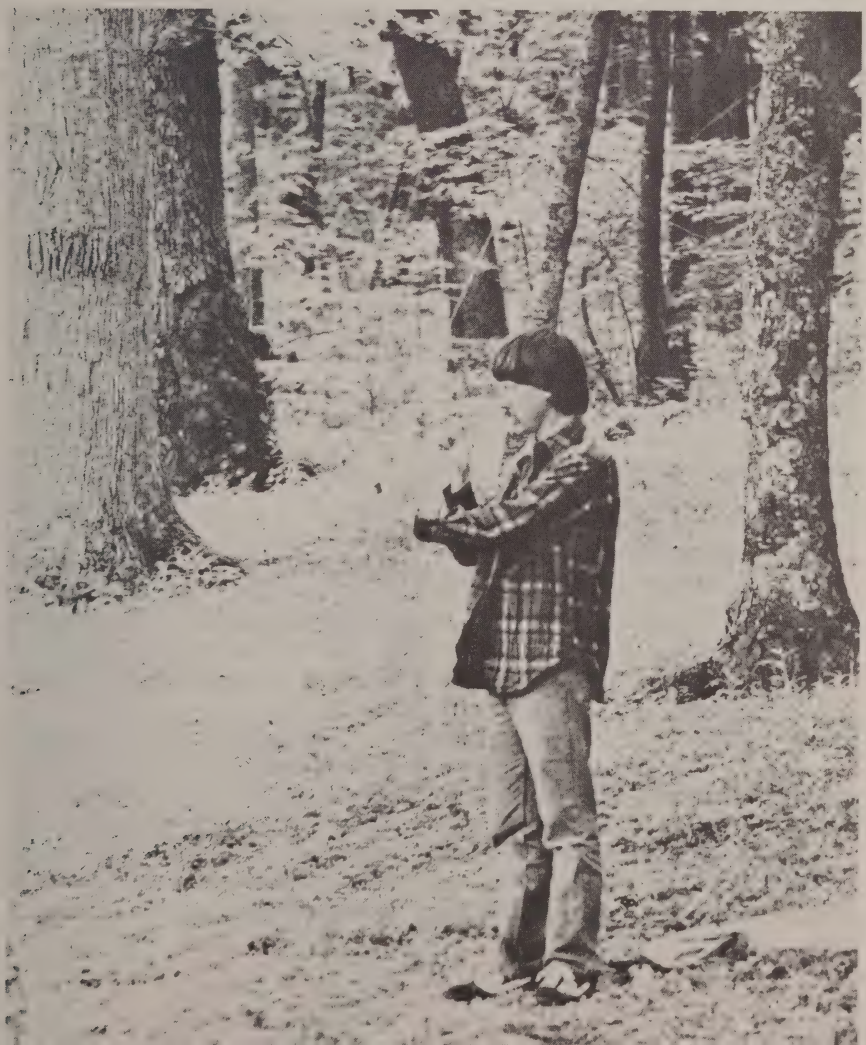
In my dreams that night, I see a lighthouse and a beacon of light. The dawn touches my face and I awaken refreshed. Soon, I know, we'll exchange addresses and be off on our separate ways. For weeks to come, these wilderness scenes will replay themselves in our dreams. In these dreams I am an eagle, and I roam the high places, singing quietly and gently to myself.

## MICHAEL H. BROWN'S

# Wilderness Opinions

**On Spirituality:** Spirituality for me is the state of being spirited in life, being filled with energy and enthusiasm, being responsible or able to respond in creative and spontaneous ways. It means being fully human, with all of one's capacities open or opening.

All cultures, especially native, primitive peoples, have this process of preparation, exploration, and integration at the core of their rituals of spiritual growth. It's an honorable



format, a whole work, if transformation occurs as a result of it. I say "if" because integration is the step that often is missing in the unwise, unschooled approach to mind-expanding experiences of some kinds. Integration *has* to occur. We need to come back into our conscious, rational minds and ask, "What was true there? What did I touch — in, say, my wilderness vision quest — that was valuable? What do I need to keep from that experience and incorporate into my life?"

**Rites of Passage:** Processes of preparation, exploration, and integration were part of native, primitive peoples' cultures. They are absent in today's communities. The closest things we have to mysteries and/or initiations take place in the organized religions. But these experiences don't often engage initiates at the deepest psychological levels. They have to do with Scripture, with cognitive processes, with codes of morality, instead of being deep personal experiences. We come from nuclear families that frequently are busted up. Half of us grow up with single or divorced parents or stepparents. All of these are heavy life-experiences which don't often get integrated.

**The Mandala:** One of the technologies I use in my work is symbolic artwork, or the mandala. The mandala is one of the simplest yet most powerful symbols that exist. You draw a circle and in the middle of the circle or around it you fill in color of some kind. The circle provides a frame into which you can release the contents of the unconscious. All levels come together in one statement in the drawing of your mandala. When it's done, you can wonder about it, question it, dialogue with it, share it with other people as coming from the deepest place possible inside of you.

**Wilderness Vision Quest:** It is the finest conjunction of everything I know. It involves my love and appreciation of nature, my awareness that nature brings us back to our normal, natural state of health and well-being. It gives me six or seven days with people to talk to, share with, walk with, sweat with, sing with, draw with, cry with. It provides me with an occasion to reveal my own struggles and listen to the struggles and discoveries of others. It is the result of the thirty-three years of my life and all the different training programs I've ever been in. They come together in one intense spiral of energy.

**Nature:** Nature is important because it bumps us out of our routines and impels us toward spontaneity and responsibility. Just being on the land and living on the land for a week makes us alert. Nature really doesn't care if we get hyperthermia and freeze to death. If you really care to be one with nature, you can't be indifferent to it, you have to be living with it.

How often does this happen in life? Not often, for we close down, block up, shut out, defend, and resist. This doesn't work in the wilderness. You hear rain on the mountain and you know you've got three minutes to get your poncho on.

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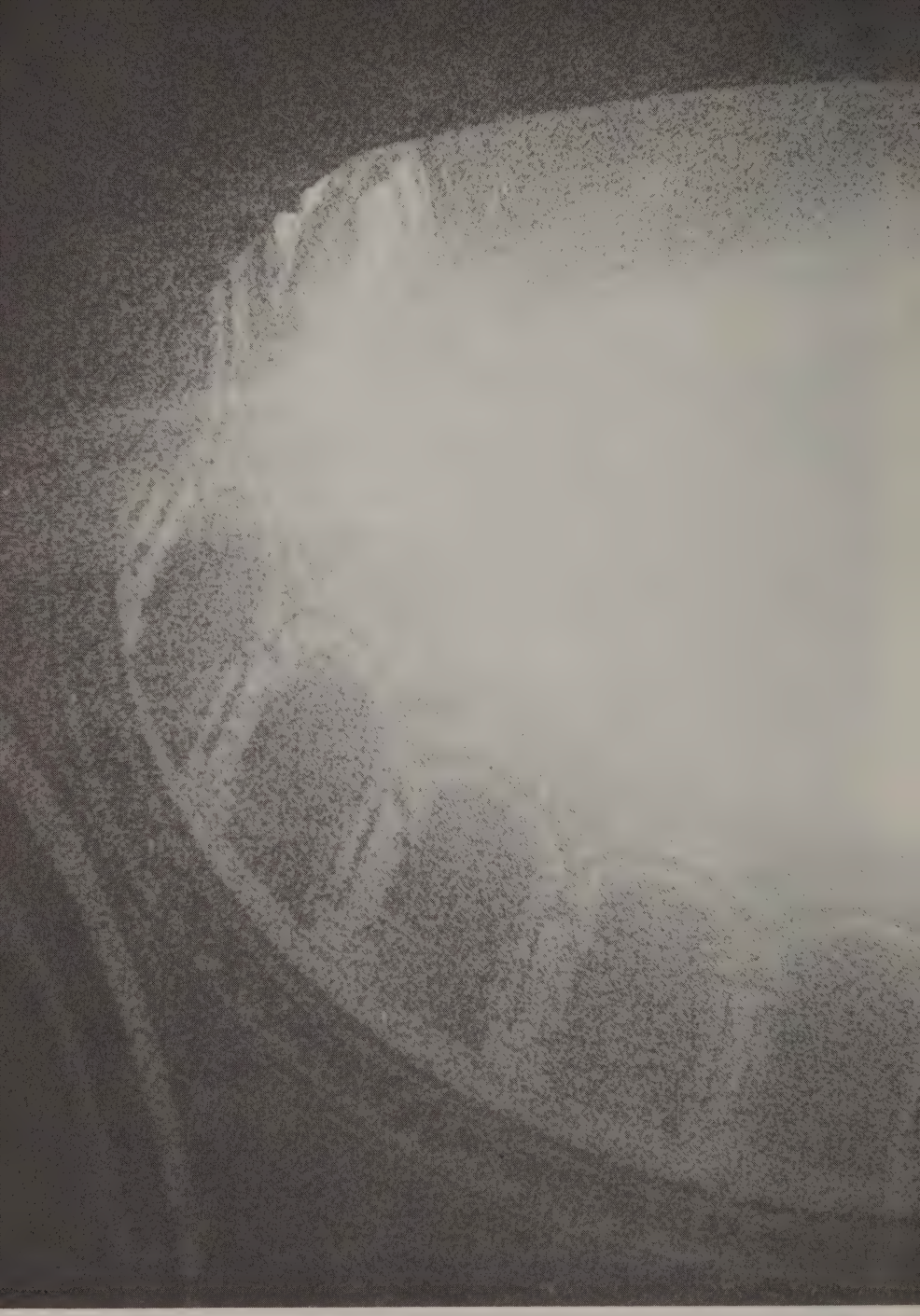


SACRE COEUR Photograph by Brian Yer

# MARK TOBEY

## 1890-1976

MARK TOBEY was one of the salient figures of 20th-century art, and in that society of enlightened individuals, it can be said of him that he more than held his own. With brush strokes that could be "explosively bold, but are more often as delicate as the strands of a spider web or as ephemeral as smoke rising from a cigarette," he created an indelible record of artistic talent.

Tobey was not only an artist. He was also a man of the world, and an accomplished gentleman, whose rich and vibrant nature overflowed with abounding energy. A writer of expressive prose, an avid musician and composer, a prolific reader and a magnificent talker whose small stature yet impressive appearance — with white hair billowing from the high forehead, and a closely cropped beard shaping the vigorous chin — completed the effect. And yet there was something more. He was a man in whose presence one was instantly aware of some mysterious quality, of some legacy which infiltrated the very essence of his being and transformed itself so consummately onto his canvases. But what was the explanation of it all? The inner cause, the motivating force, was an inexhaustible store of spiritual convictions which placed him, with Georges Rouault, at the apex of 20th-century spiritual painters.

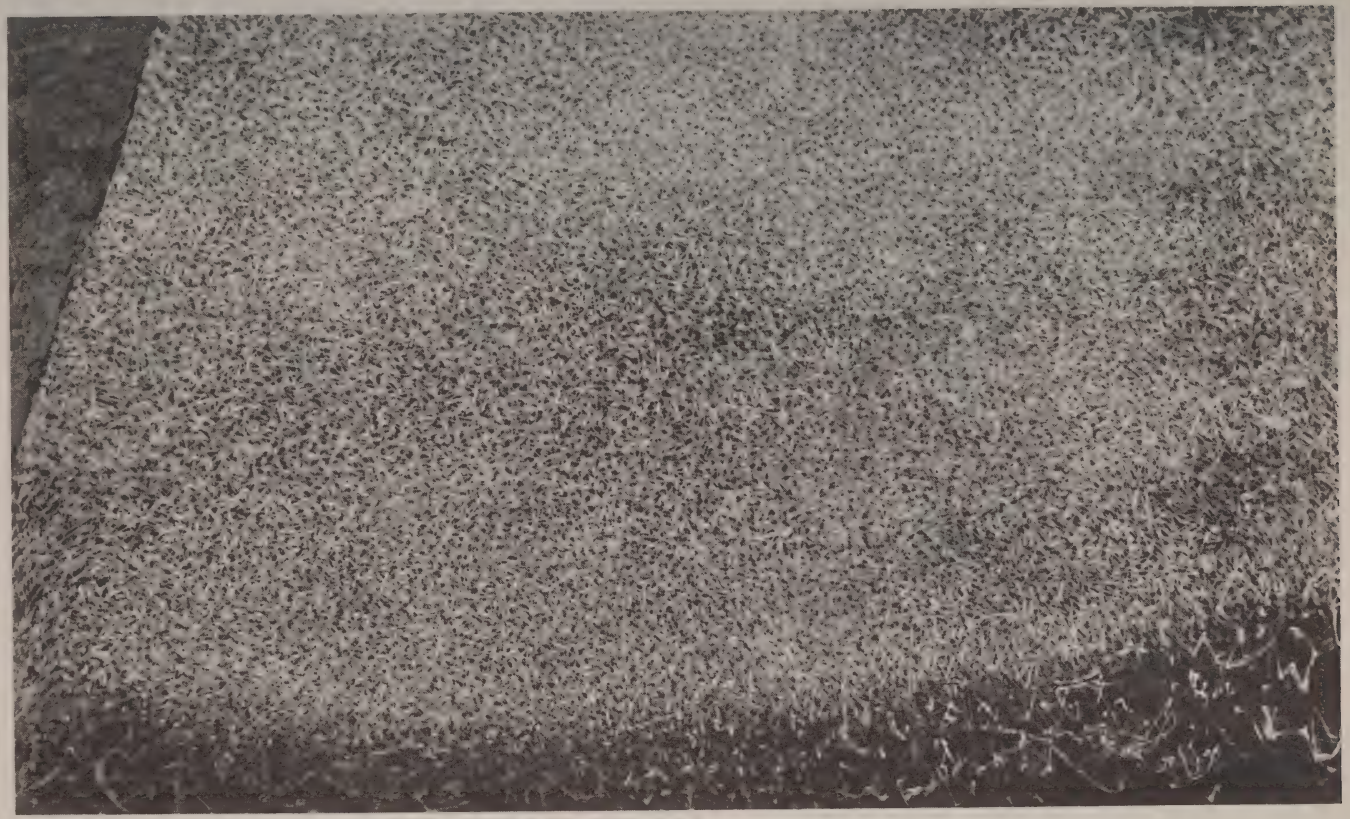
The significance of Tobey's art — for nothing could have been more deliberate or far-reaching — stems from his conversion to the Baha'i World faith in 1918. Although Tobey had painted prior to that moment, the substance of his art is the direct outcome of this revelation. If he saw the highest reality as spiritual, it is because the Baha'i faith provided him with a vehicle to understand the "oneness" of nature, art, science, and religion.

His life which was long, his work which demonstrated the interpenetrations of his art and life, his fame which grew and is now established are all organically integrated. But the paradox of the achievement lay precisely in the extreme improbability that his belief would remain buoyant in an age which "isolates itself from spiritual currents." His knowledge that the highest reality is spiritual rather than material, timeless rather than temporal, is so incongruous to the ordinary 20th-century mind. Only Tobey could combine those beliefs to produce *Edge of August* on the opposite page.

In *Edge of August* we are aware of the myriad consciousnesses which inhabit Tobey's talents, all skillfully expressed as a series of scents, pulsations, and sensations. There are no sharp contrasts, no marked delineations, only the enigmatic suggestiveness of something well beyond man's visual perceptions. Perhaps a sense of transcendental human awareness best expresses Tobey's desired intentions, for he was supremely concerned with the deleterious effects of this age upon humans who "all feel a separateness — we wish a drop of water would soften our ego."

by JOHN S.D. GLAUS

*EDGE OF AUGUST. 1953. By Mark Tobey. Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Purchase.*



# WOMEN'S SPIRITUAL JOURNEYINGS

by DORIS DONNELLY

CHRISTIAN writers have not always been kind to women. Writers in the early centuries frequently gave vent to their special disgust for the feminine gender and were categorical in their denunciations of women. Augustine of Hippo, for one, was sure that apart from child-bearing, there was no way to understand woman as a helpmate for man. Even in the noble act of giving birth, Augustine connected woman with "feces and urine," and it was the lucky woman who did not have to go through that experience. Venantius Fortunatus explained the pervasive disdain for demale sexuality when he wrote, "Happy virgin . . . she does not weigh down sluggish limbs with an imprisoned embryo; she is not depressed and worn out by its awkward weight." St. John Eudes carried through on this theme in the 17th century when he wrote of the unbaptized fetus as the victim of original sin: "It is a subject of humiliation of all the mothers of children of Adam to know that while they are with child,

they carry with them an infant . . . who is the enemy of God, the object of his hatred and malediction, and the shrine of the demon."

Given this characterization of woman, how was a person to behave in her presence? Thomas Aquinas provided the human race with guidelines for interaction when near the "defiled" and "defective" sex: "Father and mother are loved as principles of our natural origin. Now the father is principle in a more excellent way than the mother, because he is the active principle, while the mother is a passive and material principle. Consequently, strictly speaking, the father is to be loved more."

Women did not remain passive through this demeaning historical atmosphere. Numbers of women referred to as "desert mothers" left city life to escape enforced domesticity and the inferiority of pre-arranged marriages. In the desert, these women lived hermit existences, practiced prayer, and studied and developed writing skills. Unfortunately, their works are no longer extant, probably because none of these women had religious communities to keep their writing alive.

By the Middle Ages, with the support of a religious congregation, Teresa of Avila emerged as a major literary figure. By any standards, her output was prolific — all the more so when we recall that her first work was published when Teresa was forty-five years old. Her autobiography appeared when she was forty-seven, and her writing was capped by the acclaimed and significant *Interior Castle*, which she produced in 1577 at the age of sixty-two.

Teresa of Avila excelled in a biographical form of spiritual literature that women since her time have emulated with an impressive record of success. Like Teresa, most of these women were part of large religious houses which preserved, copied, and distributed the works of talented sisters like Hildegarde of Bingen, Mechtild of Magdeburg, Angela of Foligno, Catherine of Siena, and Marie of the Incarnation. Occasionally the writings of some woman survived even without a convent affiliation as in the cases of Julian of Norwich and Catherine of Genoa, but this was more the exception than the rule — until recently. Now women of all Christian denominations and occupations continue the tradition of the spiritual autobiography. Dorothy Day *(The Long Loneliness)*, Catherine Marshall *(Something More)*, and Emilie Griffin *(Turning)* — to name only three — are people whose personal stories of conversion and faithfulness to a call have that unmistakable ring of truth about them that speaks to women of all generations and cultures.

One of the most recent and most ingenuous personal witnessings in this biography genre comes from Pinions, the pseudonym for a 20th century Anglican anchoress, who was once an officer in the women's division of the RAF, settling down to a very unconventional nun's life as the result of a low-keyed conversion experience after World War II. Annie Dillard wrote the introduction to this brief autobiography, *Wind on the Sand*, which is candid, humorous, inspiring and instructive in the ways of God to women. The startling similarities between the experiences described in this work and those chronicled by Teresa of Avila in the *Interior Castle* corroborate it as a first class religious work of this century.

In between the 16th century Spanish mysticism of Teresa of Avila and the contemporary life of an English mystical anchoress was Evelyn Underhill — an economically and intellectually privileged woman of this century who gave retreats, lectured on the subject of prayer, and wrote prolifically on the subject of mysticism. Mrs. Moore (Evelyn married Hubert Stuart Moore, a lawyer, when she was in her thirties, but decided not to change her name) claimed that her finest work was *The Golden Sequence.* Enchanting as it is, I prefer *Mysticism* and *Practical Mysticism.* The latter is a gem of a classic that suggests that direct experiences of God are open to everyone, even those in the most mundane and ordinary circumstances.

Evelyn Underhill paralleled the medieval mystics not in their autobiographical writings as much as in their analyses of the mystical experience itself. She was a poet and writer with wit and style and clarity who used the best insights of her mentor Friedrich von Hugel as the frame in which she interpreted the interior life. We have in Evelyn Underhill devotional writing acquainted with the classics, theology, and philosophy that could and did bear up well under the closest and sharpest critical scrutiny. After publication of *Mysticism*, she became the scholar to whom Britain turned to to translate or to edit and write introductory essays to the devotional writings of Jan Ruysbroeck, Nicolas de Cusa, Walter Hilton, Bernard of Clairvaux, and others.

In the last ten years of Evelyn Underhills's life, her letters of spiritual direction or guidance are among the most precious things we possess of her wisdom in nurturing the spiritual lives of others. Happily, we have a volume of these letters with a fine biographical essay to introduce them.

Unhappily, there is no woman on the contemporary scene who has emerged as a competent successor to Evelyn Underhill and a match for her vast erudition. Monica Furlong is probably closest of all, and her biography of Thomas Merton *(Harper and Row, 1980)* has gone a long way in establishing her as a wise guide in spiritual matters. Apart from Furlong, the limited spiritual orientation of Carol Christ and Rosemary Reuther are helpful references and help tide us over until an unself-conscious, peaceful, holy, and literate woman appears among us to pick up where Evelyn left off.

# Recommended Reading

There are many ways to enter the realm of the spiritual experience of women. Some suggestions:

Betty Edwards, *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain (Los Angeles: J.P. Tarcher, Inc., 1979, $8.95.)* Edwards uses recent discoveries in brain research as well as Zen and contemplation and applies them to drawing skills.

Her thesis is that the right hemisphere of the brain (the non-rational, analogic, intuitive, holistic, and synthetic) is more conducive to creativity in drawing than the left hemisphere. Her book has interesting ramifications for the spiritual process in art and the crossover between religious and artistic discipline.

Mary Gordon, *The Company of Women, (New York: Ballantine paperback edition, 1982, $3.50.)* Mary Gordon is the gifted novelist who wrote *Final Payments* several years ago. Her subject in *The Company of Women* is the struggle and growth of a Catholic girl from Queens, New York. The heroine, Felicitas, is surrounded by a widowed mother and four of her mother's friends whose lives center around an unusual Roman Catholic priest, Father Cyprian. The influence that these women and their priest exert on Felicitas is the focus of this well written and touching story.

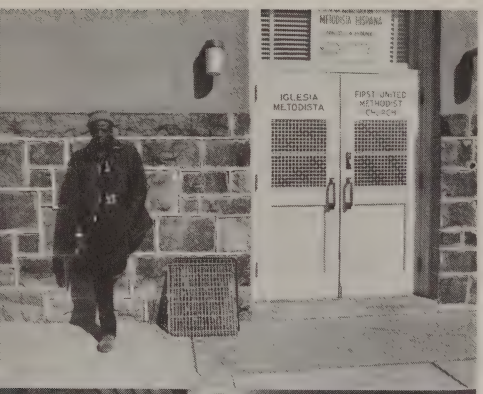
Pinions, *The Wind on the Sand (Ramsey, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1980, $3.95.)* This is a fascinating book written by Pinions ("wings"), the pseudonym of a former RAF officer who was led by a series of voices and visions to become an anchoress in the countryside of England. There she lived in a small hut attached to a cathedral in much the same way that Julian of Norwich did six centuries earlier. Here she prayed, tended her garden, and corresponded with hundreds of persons from all over the world who turned to her in confidence. Striken by illness shortly after making her vows as an anchoress, Pinions has valuable, orthodox and practical advice to offer on mystical prayer and the subject of suffering.

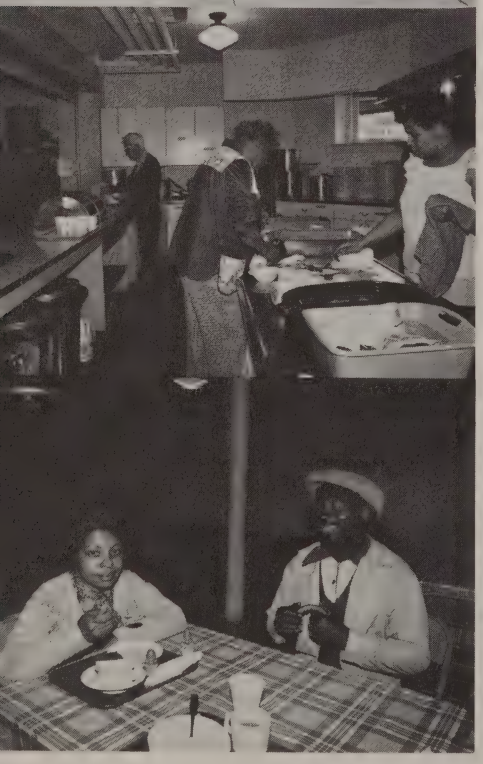
Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism: A Study of the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, A Dutton paperback, 1961.)* This is the book that established Evelyn Underhill as the leading British scholar in the field of spirituality. It is divided into 2 main sections: the first, called "The Mystic Fact," explains the relation of mysticism to vitalism, psychology, theology, symbolism and magic; the second part, "The Mystic Way," describes the awakening, purification and training of the self in its ascent to the path which leads to the blessedness of the unitive life. The appendix is equally excellent, offering an historical sketch of European mysticism from the beginning of the Christian era to the death of Blake.

Alice Walker, *In Love and Trouble (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1978, $3.75.)* Alice Walker is a black novelist and short-story writer whose familiarity with Catholicism and evangelism inspires some extraordinary insights about woman's spiritual journey. She is a cross between Notake Shange and Flannery O'Connor — and is able to penetrate the wickedness and redemption of the South with wisdom and humor. This collection of short stories is simply her best; a full half of them deal with the spiritual struggles, temptations, and triumphs of woman.

# Alice Parker's Kitchen

Photo Essay by JONATHAN BLOCK



IT'S an old structure, probably once one of the grandest churches in central New Jersey. Now it's just another large building trying to fight off years of neglect and decay. It's the First United Methodist Church, and it's the home of Trenton's only soup kitchen for the city's poor.

Founded by Alice Parker *(at right)*, the kitchen has served nearly one thousand lunches a month since the beginning of the year. For many of the kitchen's customers, it is the only decent meal of the day. The meals, which are prepared and served by volunteers from local churches and community groups, consist of a different homemade soup every day, a sandwich, and, whenever possible, a dessert. "We try not to use the word 'nutritious,'" Alice Parker says, "but we try to make the meal well-balanced and as interesting as we can. No one gets seconds until we're sure everyone's had at least firsts."

In addition to food, Mrs Parker attempts to provide clothing, housing — whatever help is necessary. "We try to get to know the entire person," she says, pointing out an elderly man in the kitchen who, she said, wore a pacemaker. "We try to learn their special needs."

Everyone who eats at the kitchen is asked to make a monetary contribution. "We ask for fifty cents," Mrs Parker says, "but anything is accepted. We want people to feel they are contributing something, not just receiving a handout."

A Story by ESTHER TRAVERS

# Within A Web of Time

"AT LAST have made wonderful discovery in the Valley, a magnificent tomb with seals intact; recovered same for your arrival . . ."

On November 22, 1922, Howard Carter's persistent efforts to find the tomb of Tutankhamun brought him to the threshold of his reward; his archeological search, interrupted by the war, was now triumphant. He had spent more than thirty years in Egypt, becoming more convinced that the tomb of Tutankhamun, who had reigned more than 3,200 years before, was hidden somewhere in the Valley of the Kings. It was on November 26 that Lord Carnarvon, financing Carter's dig, arrived from London with his daughter to join Carter at the door of the tomb, at which moment the drilling of the doorway to the interior began. The rest is history.

What did this history mean to a ten-year-old child, this discovery and excavation? She was highly excited, deeply engrossed in the newspaper accounts and photographs of the tomb's treasures, of the opening of the sarcophagus and the finding of the mummy of the king. My parents, amused by the child's interests, were themselves indifferent to the tomb and its findings. Emigres from the Egypt that was Russia, they were not stirred by the Egyptian king of several millenia ago. That excitement, surfaced in me, that child, feelings of suffocation, feelings which have come and gone most of my life, as a fever gone wild, to this day. As I write now, I must tell myself that I am now not suffocating, just feeling that I am.

Was it the Valley of Kings, so majestic a name, that great solemn open space of burial ground, one part of ancient Thebes, that swept through me? Was it an ancient memory? Once during my many visits to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, at the old Egyptian collection, I stood in front of a funerary boat, glass enclosed atop an exhibition pedestal. I was there but a few minutes when the sail quivered for a few moments, then stopped. Startled and somewhat puzzled, I said nothing to my companion as I joined her at another part of the gallery. Would she think I fabricated this happening? She knew me better than that, but silently I thought, did I once sail the Nile, a slave in Egypt, or perhaps a scribe? I preferred the latter. I learned early in childhood to withhold certain of my inner and outer experiences, lest it be thought I was lying.

It was the opening of the tomb that spoke to the child, a culmination of the soul's whisperings. It was the discovery of the great sarcophagus that was to reveal the Pharoah's coffin and treasures that were to accompany him through his after-life journey. The belief was that every good man, like Osiris, would rise from the dead.

If a coffin so ancient could be found and opened, could not Sophir's grave be found and would the finding raise her from the dead and breathe life

into a life still alive though deceased some ten years? Would she come out of her grave to dance until dawn like the legendary Willis, maidens who have died before their wedding days? Would she dance, emerging from her grave an angel, or a winged cherub in a dance that would forever release me from our embryonic bond?

Sophir, my twin sister, died from an acute skin disease, erysipelas, and malnutrition when we were but two months old. I was born first, she an hour later; we were third in the family line with two older sisters. There were whispers that echoed through the house after the intimate visits of aunts and tale-telling cousins: ". . . not wanted . . . thwarted abortion attempts . . .". By means known to women throughout time, often they worked and sometimes not. They were whispers of mixed and uncertain emotions not understood; they were negative messages of self-hatred and guilt sent to the as yet unborn. To the surviving child accusations and remorse were transmitted via a silent language and symbolic acts and were translated and absorbed as survivor's guilt. When Sophir died, I died her death and that experience and my existence became my life long burden.

It was at the time of the newspaper accounts of the tomb's discovery that I began to have the recurrent dream that was for several years a quiet nightmare. I told no one. I moved in a tree-lined enclosure, face downward above the ground, my body flat out and dressed like a modern astronaut's in a white space suit. Perhaps at another time, eons away, I was an astronaut. I moved and hovered simultaneously over a grave, freshly covered with earth and moving towards the tombstone, which was a free-standing brick wall about five feet in height. I did not attempt to go around it or over it, but wanted to go through it, yet I never came close enough. There was always a distance between the wall and my release. The dream did not seem to frighten me, I began to take it for granted, but the sickening odor of the dank earth of the grave became a renewed sensation daily and the beginning of migraine headaches that were to last some thirty years. I was about ten years of age then, fearful of telling my parents my dream lest they think I was fabricating, or even worse, lying. The remedy for the headaches was a cloth dipped in vinegar applied to my forehead; my room had to be in utter darkness, as light or sound, reaching me from anywhere in the house was recorded upon my very being as if by some evil torment like the writing machine in Kafka's "Penal Colony".

In the third chamber of Tuthankhamun's tomb a small chest of ebony and redwood, amongst the many treasures photographed, reminded me of another death, the coffin of another child, Tommy, who had died at the age of six, during the great influenza epidemic. I loved him with a passion. I was six, too. His cheeks always flushed a rose-petal pink, his skin was fair, and his hair black in a soft disarray of ringlets. A non-blond angel, animated and joyful. His brogue was a delight, a music somewhat familiar, as if I had heard it before.

He would come to my house after school for milk and cookies and play, gleeful when my mother ceremoniously unwrapped chocolate candy-kisses

from their silver papers and dropped them into our milk. Tommy lived with his aunt, who had brought him over from Ireland just the year before. Now he was dead. The grown-ups said he went to "Heaven". To me there was little consolation in the knowledge that he would no longer be at school, and where was Heaven, anyway? It was not satisfactorily explained.

My family came daily to visit Tommy's aunt. On the first several days we found her prostrate on her bed, swathed in a mist of black veils and mourning dress. Her image still floats to the surface of my mind, like a dark Venus rising out of a stormy sea. Some events I do remember well — only too well — and I'd rather not; some I cannot recall, and want to, but they refuse to admit me to their history and place of hiding within the subterranean vaults and turrets of memory.

We all continued to remember Tommy to this day; he was much loved. Some sixty-four years later it's still an obsession. Was he in this lifetime but a memory remnant of another time, another life shared? Was he like the Phoenix, the bird of Arabia, unique and unparalleled in the rest of the world? The Phoenix lives beyond five hundred years, and when it notices that it is growing old, it builds itself a funeral pyre after collecting some spice branches and, turning its body towards the rays of the sun and flapping its wings, sets fire to itself until it burns up. Then on the ninth day afterward, it rises from its own ashes. Like this legendary bird, we seem to live five hundred years every day, then rise up out of our psychic flames to go on.

Some ten years ago, still haunted by the silenced life that took me with her, I visited the Mount Zion Cemetery in Queens, New York, where Sophir was buried. All I could learn was that the children's burial ground was apart from the rest of the cemetery and that I would have to wander about until I could find her grave, and so I wandered about. The day was cold and brilliant, it was by now high afternoon, before darkness was to set in. I came upon an elderly man, about sixty or so, his worn coat tied around his waist with a rope, and his shoes, seeming too big for his feet, were laced with knotted string. There was a quick and deep imprint of him left upon my sensibilities. An old fur hat covered his ears, as much a part of his head as his eyes, which were hollowed out of his forehead and pierced with light. I sensed he was there for a purpose; without hesitation I approached him and asked him to pray for me and told him why. I spoke in a kind of pidgin Yiddish, a source of embarrassment to me; I didn't want to offend him by addressing him in the informal "you". He answered in Yiddish, which I understood perfectly, that he prayed for and with the bereaved and that he would help me find Sophir's grave, which he did, quickly, as if he knew precisely where it was. It was there waiting for me to appear: a small gravestone, about a foot high, rounded edges and weather-worn, the stone almost porous as if seen through a microscope. Yet her name was clear enough to be read . . . "Sophir Bennett, born February 23, died April 24, 1912".

The sky was reaching that high blue-to-green; the cold turned to a burning heat within me as the prayers were being offered in Hebrew. I did not understand the words, but I understood the message and the messenger. We

lingered silently for a few moments and he then walked with me to the gate.

I was curious about this person who seemed, at least outwardly, at peace, with a quiet dignity that only being in his presence could sufficiently define. He earned a meager livlihood, he said, from the free-will offerings from those who sought his prayers and help; he was there waiting. Some days no one came to the cemetery, but he was always there. Was this a vow of poverty? Had he once been a rabbi or a religious in an eastern European *shtetl*, or perhaps a survivor of the Holocaust, praying there for the living and for their dead and for those who met their death by slaughter as a way of watching over those victims, deceased and gone from this world without being called, and without the dignity of burial rites? Had he chosen the mantle of an Antigone to bring surcease to his own pain and that of others?

I boarded the bus, daylight covered over by the garments of oncoming evening, and remembered little of the train ride to Manhattan. I had journeyed into that frail web of time that is a circle, having no beginning and no end.

I had seen this man once before, in Hyde Park in London in 1938, asleep on a bench, a vagrant. His head rested on his arm, crooked for a pillow. It was winter, a cold and brilliant morning. He was hatless, his hair and beard snow-white and his threadbare coat tied around his waist by rope; withal he looked as if he had just left his bath. Feeling like a trespassing tourist, I had to photograph him. The light fell upon him as if the master painter of all masters were performing his art, unseen, through a screen of another dimension. My picture of him was worthy of a master painter, which I might have been, had I not gone to the grave with Sophir.

Now there's a bouquet of flowers for my writing table, a birthday greeting in a clear crystal vase. Small hybrid pink carnations, lavender mums, purple statice, and bridal wreath bring the month of June to a winter's day. When we were grown up and long living our separate lives, my older sister told me that on the day Sophir and I were born, Father brought Mother a huge bunch of lilacs.

Yet, once I dreamed in another dream that I was an architect and built a house of worship of massive stone to keep the silence in and external sounds out, and of vaulted ceilings that collected the energies of human yearnings and returned them, rays of light, upon a service that had no beginning and no end known. Oak panels hung, carved in the likenesses of men and women who accepted the urgency of courage that listening inwardly and living those voices outwardly requires.

Benches before each panel were resting-places for meditation and taking discourse with those guardians of all life to be lived. The inner doors to the sanctuary were great thick slabs of oak hinged with wrought iron, black as night, carved with the legends of the heavenly bodies. Alabaster urns, embraced by doves in flight, were posted atop the doors, angels inviting the spirit. And the floor was stone to capture the sounds of human presence, echoing back recognition.

No pews, no music, no intermediaries, it was a sanctuary designed to liberate the indwelling spirit and a peace, not to be confused with death.

# The Power Of The Arts

## PART ONE

by EUGENE RAUDSEPP

THE relationship between the fine arts and religion is extremely close. Indeed, it is typical of almost all known religions to express themselves in several, and sometimes all, of the forms of art. Some scholars have speculated that religion must have been their common mother. Looking at it from the side of the arts, it is probable that had religious intuitions remained empty of aesthetic form and appeal to imagination and feeling, their significance throughout human history would have been considerably reduced. Spiritual aspiration, contemplation, and worship express themselves most vitally in the intuitions, creative imagination, and feelings of the arts. Arts impart on religious aspirations a dramatic power, excellence of form, vitality of meaning, freshness of originality, charm of sense and other positive aesthetic attributes that make them at once more real and more significant to spiritual feelings. Let us briefly review how the specific arts are associated with religions.

Architecture has been traditionally the most direct expression to nearly all of the historical religions. Countless temples, basilicas, mosques, abbeys, cathedrals and other structures give silent evidence of mankind's natural desire to erect "more stately mansions" to its spiritual hopes and aspirations so that they may become more powerful incentives to devotion. Whatever is gracious, generous of spirit, just, pure, serene, fulfilling of life or devotion has been, in varying degrees, strengthened and made more delightful and real to the human spirit by architecture.

Music also, in one form or another, enters into the ritual of most, although not all religions. There are those who maintain that music has the capacity to give expression spiritual yearnings in a more intimate, intense, and complete way than do any of the other creative art forms. So potent is the aesthetic excellence of music and its power to evoke the perfections envisaged by religion that even many "secular" works often attain religious character by touching off our awareness of the reality and power of benevolence, serenity, integration of mind, and other high qualities of the spiritual dimension.

Of the literary arts, both poetry and prose can be considered as some of the more potent vehicles for giving expression to the ideas and purposes of historical faiths. Indeed, it would be difficult to imagine the existence and growth of our spiritual aspirations without the literary arts. And, as is the case with music, there are a large number of "secular" literary works which, in a profound and authentic way, give voice to our deepest spiritual aspirations. There are, for example, many inspiring and beautiful passages from Wordsworth, Shakespeare, Burton, Emerson, Stevenson, and many others, which are universally recognized as possessing profound relevance to religion by their penetrating insights, truth, and beauty.

And last, but not least, there are many paintings and sculptures which may be considered as the very essence of spiritual experience. It is evident that these works of art can be truly regarded as the preeminent exponents of religion on its highest plane.

**Arts and Healing**

The arts have a natural power of healing. Countless emotionally sick and

maladjusted people have recovered their psychological health through active participation in the arts. Many psychiatric institutions are utilizing art-experiences for therapeutic purposes.

Among the "adjunctive therapies" at one mental hospital is a monthly publication written and produced by mental patients. Following are two poems written by patients who eventually regained their psychological health. Their poems not only reveal something of the nature of mental illness but of the present human condition as well. The themes which recur in these poems are loneliness, the search for love, the search for self and for self-understanding — a type of self-revelation generally characteristic of the best in lyric verse. The poems are of extraordinary sensitivity and can easily be compared to that written by the most acknowledged poets.

*ALONE*

*How can one hear the awful loneliness*
*That makes the child shriek in the darkness for*
*his mother,*
*That forces the hollow laughter of adults at*
*cocktail parties*
*And gnaws at the heart of the aged as they sit, sit,*
*sit, and rock, rock, rock?*
*Oh, we may dress the fearful ghost in activity*
*And by disguising it, forget for a while that it*
*haunts our busy footsteps*
*As we hurry and scurry, push and shove, race, pant,*
*strain, work, work, work, keeping busy, busy, busy.*
*But when we return at night to our empty rooms,*
*There sits the unwelcome guest with its hollow eyes*
*and gaping mouth, beckoning to us with a bony finger.*
*So that we run into the bedroom, slam the door,*
*and fling ourselves upon a solitary bed*
*And weep, weep, weep, cold tears, tears, tears.* — *T.R.*

*SONNET*

*As petals open one by one, asserting*
*The perfect sudden purity of bloom,*
*Or as a child thrusts into light, deserting*
*That chaste, archaic haven of the womb,*
*The guarded spirit struggles, frets, travails*
*To open, leaf by leaf itself, unclose*
*And flower, quickened, fed by truth, assails*
*Imponderable darkness; laboring, grows*
*Toward some mighty knowledge and intent,*
*Pursuit primeval as the blood's old surge,*
*The balance of negation and consent*
*That love at last may brilliantly emerge;*

*As phoenix-like the spirit moves through flame*
*To give itself a passage, home, and name.* — *B.E.*

But one does not have to be psychologically sick to appreciate the therapeutic effects of the arts. There is hardly a person who has not experienced effective relief from emotional pressures and tensions that result from active participation in, or appreciation of, either music, painting, sculpture, poetry, literature, dance, or any of the other arts. The function of art as a "consoler" and a "healer" has been recognized by many artists, among whom the Finnish artist, Yrjo Hirn says: "Art moves among men, ennobling their joy and blunting the edge of their suffering."

**Arts and the Joy of Living**

The power of the arts, however, extends far beyond its healing function. In a significant measure, the arts can be counted among the chief human preoccupations which makes our attainment of joy and contentment more secure. As Walter Pater observed: "Art comes proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake."

Considering the powerful influence the arts have in creating more appreciative, creative and effective personalities, it is strange, indeed, that they are not given a more central role in our educational systems. As the educator Erskine Caudwell states, "If, in our education, we devoted more time to the understanding of the arts and the values of the artist, we would be training men and women to be more sensitive, more capable of happiness, more imaginative and more idealistic, loving order, perfection, truth, sincerity and harmony. What higher aims could education have? . . . One of the greatest failures of contemporary societies is the failure to make life really worth living, to put true happiness within the grasp of the individual."

The noted social critic, Lewis Mumford, likewise feels that without the precious moments, the basic consummations and delights which the art-experience provides, life is robbed of one of its more important potential fulfillments and satisfactions: "What man creates in art and thought justifies itself, not only by contributing to life's development and the emergence of new values, but by the production of significant moments. Those who have encountered those moments, who have held them close, can never be altogether cheated or frustrated, even by life's worst misfortunes or by its untimely curtailment."

**Arts and the Feeling of "Completeness"**

Of most experiences in life, the arts are, perhaps, one of the few that provide us recurrently and richly with the rewarding feelings of completeness, of "wholeness." When we enjoy the arts, we gain a brief respite from the fragmentary, the interrupted, the partial, the enforced, or the tedious that bedevil much of our everyday pedestrian existence. The arts enable us to see

life, if only for an instant, as a "whole." John Dewey explained this as follows: "A work of art elicits and accentuates this quality of being a whole and of belonging to the larger, all-inclusive, whole which is the universe in which we live. This fact, I think, is the explanation of that feeling of exquisite intelligibility and clarity we have in the presence of an object that is experienced with aesthetic intensity. It explains also the spiritual feeling that accompanies intense aesthetic perception. We are, as it were, introduced into a world in which we live in our ordinary experiences. We are carried out beyond ourselves to find ourselves. I can see no psychological ground for such properties of an experience save that, somehow, the work of art operates to deepen and to raise to great clarity that sense of an enveloping undefined whole . . . This whole is then felt as an expansion of ourselves."

The ever increasing tempo of modern life prevents our daily experiences from cumulating into a coherent meaning — into a feeling of fulfillment. There is very little interlacing or carry-over from one experience, incident, or event to another. This keeps any single experience from standing out, for any length of time, as a salient figure upon the ever-shifting panorama of daily events. Only rarely do the separate experiences of our daily lives add up to a meaningful unity or "whole." In the flux of our experiences there often remains little or no trace, no crystallized meaning, no pleasant aftertaste — only a dark undercurrent of unrequited longing or too swift satisfaction. Yet, we are engaged in a never-ending struggle toward the order of unity or integration, toward a coherent and meaningful whole, so superlatively attained in meaningful art-experiences.

**Arts and the Existential Present**

In his excellent short story, *The Apple Tree*, John Galsworthy writes: "No getting out of it — a maladjusted being, civilized man! There could be no garden of his choosing, of 'the Apple-tree, the singing, and the gold', in the words of that lovely Greek Chorus, no achievable elysium in life, or lasting haven of happiness for any man with a sense of beauty — nothing which could compare with the captured loveliness in a work of art, set down forever, so that to look on it or read was always to have the same precious sense of exaltation and restful inebriety. Life no doubt had moments with that quality of beauty, of unbidden flying rapture, but the trouble was, they lasted longer than the span of a cloud's flight over the sun; impossible to keep them with you, as Art caught beauty and held it fast."

Life, indeed, has moments with that quality of beauty, and this leads us to a valuable attitude that frequent exposure to art-experiences may form in us and in this way help us toward integration and "wholeness." This attitude would enable us to appreciate and enjoy one of the most difficult and ineffable of treasures: the immediate present.

Because of the instrumental nature of our practical values and the coercive power of utility and necessity, we tend to exaggerate the value of things we now possess, and we live to a large degree as if absent from the existential present. Bertrand Russell indicated how aesthetically damaging is our habit of

always living in the future: "As men grow more industrialized and regimented, the kind of delight that is common in children becomes impossible to adults, because they are always thinking of the next thing, and cannot let themselves be absorbed in the moment. This habit of thinking of the 'next thing' is more fatal to any kind of aesthetic excellence than any other habit of mind that can be imagined, and if art, in any important sense, is to survive, it will not be by the foundation of solemn academies, but by recapturing the capacity for wholehearted joys and sorrows which prudence and foresight have all but destroyed."

In order to recapture this capacity for heightened joyful moments, in order to extend ourselves for wider and more significant experiences, we have to commit more time to creative activities, or to the co-creative activities of aesthetic participation and enjoyment. The joys of aesthetic experience in making or enjoying are such that, unlike the rest of our purposeful activities, they do not shrink and shrivel in memory. They are the moments of keener sensing and awareness, of consummated, freed and fulfilled self, or as Lewis Mumford puts it, "moments so intensely good in themselves, so complete, all-satisfying that neither further emergence nor transcendence seem needed, since they are present in the experience itself." Mumford proceeds to say that "without such consummations, without such precious moments, men would be but the traditional donkey, flayed by a stick behind, lured by a deceptive carrot in front of him. To be alert, to seize such moments of high insight, unconditioned action, and perfect fulfillment is one of the main lessons in life: endless activity, without this detachment and contemplation and ultimate delight, cannot bring life's fullest satisfaction."

**Rediscovery of Inwardness**

Most people emphasize the external in their living to such an extent that their subjective or internal selves have become shallow and hollow. They sorely need to rediscover those qualities that are *distinctly* human. It is the view of many prominent educators that the arts serve as one of the most effective means by which the personal in living can be rediscovered and revitalized. The arts help to restore the feeling of authenticity and realness of the subjective in our experiences. They help us to reinstate our personal values and the validity of our subjective innermost selves.

According to philosopher Henri Bergson there are basically two approaches that we can make to reality — one is essentially scientific, which simplifies, categorizes the variegated stream of reality in order to make it add to *practical* human ends. The other approach, that of the artist, is a more subtle and penetrating one, and is concerned with the unique and distinctive qualities of human beings and things. Bergson believed that the scientific approach has been the dominant one for too long, and that integrity, humaness, and, indeed, sanity would return when the artist's mode of approach is given its proper place in the scheme of things. Bergson also believed that life could best be explained by more life, as in art, and not by drawing theories from life, as is done in the sciences.

## PSALM 150

PRAISE ye the Lord. Praise God in His Sanctuary: praise Him in the firmament of His power.

Praise Him for His mighty acts: praise Him according to His excellent greatnesss.

Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet: praise Him with the psaltery and harp.

Praise Him with the timbrel and dance: praise Him with stringed instruments and organs.

Praise Him upon the loud cymbals: praise Him upon the high sounding cymbals.

Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross' Third Book . . .

# Talking About DEATH AND DYING

by D. JANI DRUCK

CHANCES are that, unless someone in your family has already died, the subject has never come up for discussion. Even when faced with the death of a family member, many families don't speak openly about it. Death is something that touches all our lives, each of us faces our own death and the death of those we love in our own ways, yet most of us choose not to think or speak openly about it. Talking about death is one of our society's most inviolable taboos.

Fortunately, in recent years thanatologists, those who study death and dying, are working to make death easier and a more natural part of life once again, for all of us. Perhaps the most well-known thanatologist is Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, who has published her third best-selling book on the subject, *Living with Death and Dying.* Her previous books, *On Death and Dying* and *Questions and Answers on Death and Dying* first addressed the issue of death in our society.

The first of the five sections in *Living with Death and Dying* is titled "House Calls and Hospital Calls: The Challenge to Hear Our Patients", and repeats some of the material and reviews the ideas in the first two books. Three case histories open the chapter and illustrate some of the problems that family members as well as patients face, and the "unfinished business' that often needs to be resolved before the patient can face his death with peace and acceptance.

The story of L. is about a thirteen-year-old girl who died of an abdominal tumor. Dr. Kübler-Ross was consulted by the family when L.'s treatment was discontinued and L. was kept at home to await the inevitable. The doctor met with L.'s siblings and with L. herself, and was able to help each of them come to terms with his particular conflict about the impending death. The brothers and sisters discussed the everyday problems of having to be quiet; not being able to watch television, as their sister was in the living room; and otherwise having their normal lives totaly disrupted by her illness. They talked about what they would like to share with her, and say to her before her death, and

they were encouraged to do so without delay. When L. seemed to be hanging on to a thread of life rather inexplicably, Dr. Kübler-Ross noted that she seemed to be unable to die, and met with her to ask whether there was something preventing her from dying. She revealed the bit of unfinished business that was standing in the way of a peaceful death: she had been told that "no one goes to heaven unless they loved God more than anyone else in the world". She feared that she would not go to heaven because she loved her parents more than anyone else in the world. Dr. Kübler-Ross, knowing that the girl must have an answer so that she could find the peace to die, responded to her in the parable-like, or symbolic, language that she has found most effective in such situations. She assured L. that, just as her teacher gave only the best students in the class the hardest assignments, God had given her the difficulty of her illness because He felt she was worth a lot.

The other two case histories are about families in which the mothers were dying, and in each case the initiative of an outside friend helped the family cope with the impending death and remain united as a family. The husbands in both cases felt isolated and alone, unsure of their ability to manage their families and their loss at the same time. In one case, a friend of the mother saw that neither parent was able to keep the family together, so she took the mother out of the hospital, and set her up at home, so the family could be together, and trips to the hospital would be eliminated. Dr. Kübler-Ross initiated a session in which the family members all met at the bedside of the mother, and the children expressed their fear of being separated and sent off to foster homes. The father, relieved at the chance to talk about the situation openly, was able to promise not to separate the children, and the mother assured him that it would be the right thing to do to marry again, thereby giving himself another chance for happiness as well as providing his children with a mother.

In the other story, a teacher contacted Dr. Kübler-Ross about a third-grader in her class and her sister, whose mother was dying. The doctor explained to the children, who had already gathered a sense of their mother's condition, that death was like a caterpillar's transformation into a butterfly. The teacher then took them to see their mother for the final time, and they whispered to her, "Mommy, soon you are going to be as free as a butterfly".

These cases and the issues that they illustrate tell us of the kind of work that Dr. Kübler-Ross and others like her are doing. The main point of that work is that people need and want to face their fears and expectations about death and dying and to talk about them. There are many ways of talking about such things, and symbolic language is often used.

One type of symbolic language is discussed in the second section of the book, entitled "The Use of Drawings Made at Significant Times in One's Life" and written at the request of Dr. Kübler-Ross by Dr. Gregg M. Furth, one of her students, and an expert in the analyzing of drawings done by children. The drawings are helpful in understanding some of the things that dying children, or children of a dying parent feel, but can't express verbally. The drawings often are quite clear expressions of the manner and attitude with

which the child is facing death.

Drawings are particularly helpful in work with children because children have a different approach to death than adults do, Dr. Kübler-Ross believes. They don't yet have all the repressions that adults have learned to put on their natural curiosity and insight. According to the author, children are born perfect beings — perfect in the harmony they are born with of the intellectual, spiritual, physical, and emotional aspects. They are sometimes able to perceive more than adults can, and more than adults know, because of this. They are also more easily able to speak directly and honestly about death, which adults shun talking about because of its negative emotional significance.

Children are not only able to speak openly about death when encouraged, but, like adults, they need to express their feelings, their fears, and their questions, even if they are not conscious of this need. By encouraging them to draw pictures, family members or other adults working with children who are facing death can uncover what is going on at many levels in the children.

The drawings of terminally ill and healthy children show their psychological and spiritual condition as well as their physical condition. Often, it is found that the child has revealed the condition of his health, the state of his illness, or even the time of his forthcoming death in a drawing.

Understanding the total condition of the child who is dying helps in treating his illness, as well as in helping him accept the end of his life. The following words by Dr. Furth explain the importance of such help:

> I have seen children and adults reach the state in which their soma (body) and psyche (soul) are in harmony. It is these dying people whose lives end serenely with a sense of fulfillment and meaning. The dying child can have this sense of completeness even if it remains unexpressed in adults' terms. I believe that it is the dying patient's right to expect others to help him reach as complete a life as he possibly can while he enters the terminal state of living. This means that this expectation is also the dying child's right. Unexpressed needs must be recognized and met. It is my conviction that drawings can communicate these unspoken wants, needs, and anxieties.

Understanding the patient's understanding of his situation is crucial to helping the patient reach a state of acceptance and peace about death. Dr. Kübler-Ross outlines in the first chapter five stages that terminally ill patients typically go through as they face their illnesses, then their deaths. The first reaction is usually one of denial and shock; the patient either doesn't believe the truth, or pretends it's not true. Next comes the stage of anger and rage, when the patient asks, "Why me?". Often the anger is taken out on those around him — family members and hospital staff — making the patient hard to deal with. The next stage is characterized by bargaining, usually with God. The patient has now begun to accept his fate, rather than questioning it, but hopes for, and asks for, an extension, a little more time. In return for this extension, often the patient promises something — to be a better Christian, or to change some way or habit of living, for instance. This stage is a temporary truce

period, in which the patient can begin to get things in order for his demise. The fourth stage is one of depression, in which the patient mourns past losses, and grieves for the life he will lose. The final stage is acceptance. Dr. Kübler-Ross differentiates acceptance from resignation: "Acceptance is a feeling of victory, a feeling of peace, of serenity, of positive submission to things we cannot change. Resignation is more of a feeling of defeat, of bitterness, of what's the use, I'm tired of fighting."

The final two sections of *Living with Death and Dying* point out the need for facilities and personnel to help dying patients and their loved ones get what they need. "Parent Care: Total Involvement in the Care of a Dying Child" is written by Martha Pearse Elliot, the mother of a child who died of leukemia. It gives a detailed picture of what life is like in a hospital which allows families to live together and emphasizes full parent involvement as well as aggressive medical care. Though parent-care pediatric units are few and far between, Ms. Elliot feels that many care centers specializing in catastrophic diseases of children could allow parents to be more involved than they are. Though there are a lot of logical reasons to keep parents out of the picture, and though parent care is not totally efficient, parents can actually relieve the staff of many of the duties that run up hospital costs, and certainly parent care offers parents and the children a meaningful experience, rather than a feeling of helplessness.

In "The Issue of Sudden Death", Dr. Kübler-Ross examines what happens in an emergency room, and when a healthy individual dies suddenly and unexpectedly. Pointing out that the urgency and critical nature of emergency room treatment leads members of hospital staffs to believe that there is simply not time to consider anyone's emotional needs. Dr. Kübler-Ross makes some suggestions as to how our hospitals can be better equipped to handle this aspect of emergency room situations. For instance, she suggests keeping specially trained volunteers or social workers or chaplains on call specifically for the comfort and needs of the relatives. Another suggestion is planning special rooms for relatives where they can have privacy and be comfortable.

In a dialogue with an emergency room employee, Dr. Kübler-Ross states her belief about the care of an emergency-room patient's relatives:

> I think our tendencies are often to sedate the crying or screaming or hysterical relatives immediately . . . I wonder sometimes whether we do this to gratify our needs . . . you know, we would like to keep them quiet, we would like to prevent them from screaming, we wish that they would sign the papers fast and get out of the hospital. But I think we can help these people much better if we do not sedate them. Of course, if we do sedate them we will get them out of the emergency-room areas fast. That doesn't really solve the problem for the relative, that only delays his reaction. And I think it would be better if they could cry and if they could ask questions and if they could sob on somebody's shoulder right there when it happened. I think you would do them a better service in the long run if you do not sedate them.

## LETTERS

Dear Sir:

My congratulations to Herrymon Maurer on his translation of and commentary on the Tao Teh Ching *("The Way of The Ways: Tao," July, 1982).* He may not be Ezra Pound, but his terse American-English rendering of Lao Tzŭ's text supplied me with many insights I had not found in the sixty-plus other translations of it that exist.

— GEORGE McQUAIN *(Philadelphia, Pa.)*

Dear Sir:

I was bowled over by "Powerlessness in Shin Buddhism" by Paul Walsh *(June, 1982).* Until I read this article, I had no idea that the concept of powerlessness plays such a crucial part in all religious experience. In my ignorance, I supposed it was to be found solely in the First Step of Alcoholics Anonymous ("We admitted we were powerless over alcohol and that our lives had become unmanageable"). Thank you for helping me realize how long this agonizing act of surrender has been necessary to mankind.

— CHARLES G. *(Oshkosh, Wisconsin)*

Dear Sir:

I am vitally interested in developments in holistic health fields and was fascinated by D. Jani Druck's "Healing In The New Age" *(April, 1982).* Several of us "on the path" are really enjoying your magazine.

— H.A. LILES *(Birmingham, Alabama)*

Dear Sir:

I wish to thank you for sending me a copy of the Fellowship in Prayer *(May, 1982)* Special Issue on my eldest brother William Hung (1893-1980). I read through the whole work, which was indeed very well edited and illustrated, interspersed with exquisite geometric designs. William would have been grateful for this honor bestowed on him had he been able to read it himself.

— FREDERICK HUNG *(Guelph, Ontario, Canada)*

Dear Sir:

I recently subscribed to your publication. The first issue was marvelous. I'm still enjoying it. However, the second issue was entirely devoted to William Hung, who may have been a noted scholar, but is of no interest whatsoever to me. If this is a one-time dedication, I can understand. But if there are more such issues in the future, I shall request a refund.

— JOSEPH A. SCOTT *(San Rafael, California)*

Dear Sir:

On the "Right To Pray" our President is 'right on.' May God preserve him.

— BARBARA JOSLIN *(Deming, New Mexico)*

Dear Sir:

At your invitation published in the June issue, I write to express my view of the President's proposed constitutional amendment purportedly to "restore the right to pray."

I am vehemently opposed to such an amendment for many reasons:

First and foremost, the President exposed his insincerity in the last three sentences of his announcement, viz:

1. "No one must ever be *forced* or *coerced* or *pressured* to take part in any religious exercise." (Emphases supplied). But this is precisely the major objective of the proposed amendment, designed purposely to overcome the 1963 Supreme Court decision which, as you may recall, enjoined state and local jurisdiction from prescribing prayers to be conducted in tax-supported public schools. This landmark decision protected my grandchildren's right *not* to pray, though it didn't come in time to protect me and my immediate children.

2. "But neither should the Government forbid religious practice." The implication that the government now bans prayer is transparently specious, and it is belied by the first very amendment in our Bill of Rights, which states: "Congress shall make no law respecting the practice of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . ."

3. "The amendment we'll propose will restore the right to pray." That right was never lost, as I have pointed out above. It is further evidenced by the fact that tens of thousands of houses of worship of all denominations, covering the entire spectrum of doctrine, conduct their services in peace and without official harassment, indeed are encouraged to do so by generous tax benefits from the public treasuries.

Who's kidding whom?

Secondly, the proposal opens up a whole Pandora's box of morality by legislation. Haven't we learned anything from the nightmare of Prohibition foisted upon us by a strident minority? Or are we perpetually doomed to

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repeat our mistakes in deliberate ignorance of the lessons of history? We already have our self-righteous zealots of the self-proclaimed "Moral Majority" busily at work burning books from public libraries which do not bear their imprimature. Shades of the Hitler era!

We need thought-control and a holy inquisition like we need a hole in the head! My fervent prayer is that the proposed amendment be consigned to the oblivion it deserves.

— SAMUEL ROMANOFF *(Swarthmore, Pa.)*

Dear Sir:

The young should be taught about all the different religions and philosophies of the world. Young people should be taught to brainstorm and heartstorm and to think and solve problems. But belief should not in any way be pressured on them.

To put prayer, a thing that has to arise from the heart, into such a public setting, is to cheat it and narrow it and in the process turn off many young people, who for the rest of their lives will have blocks against things religious. I hated poetry in school because of the way it was taught to me. In the ideal school it might be possible to have prayer without coercion and pressure, but, the way they are, it would only serve as a detriment to our country's spirituality.

— JANET MORGAN *(New York, N.Y.)*

## CREDITS

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**Efforts for World Peace Continue**

In the spirit of the renewed interest in world peace inspired by the looming threat of nuclear war, a record-breaking peace rally took place last summer. Over half a million people representing secular and religious interests as well as individual concern gathered in New York on June 12 to mark and to address the United Nations' Second Special Session on Disarmament.

Among the groups represented at the rally were members of the World Peace March. This group of about 75 American, Japanese, and foreign individuals was led by Buddhist monks in an eight-month march ending at the rally in New York. One contingent of the marchers had started out from Los Angeles in October, and were met by another which had left New Orleans in January. Passing through Princeton, where the Fellowship has its office, they stopped at a local church to be provided with a meal made by volunteers and a place to stay for the night.

*Members of the World Peace March joined in ecumenical worship on June 6 at Metropolitan Community United Methodist Church in the Harlem section of New York City. Marchers — who arrived from England, Canada, Japan, California, New England, and other points — were lodged by local congregations.*

**Program in Honor of Dr. William Hung**

Annotated volumes from the personal library of the late Dr. William Hung were presented to the University of Pittsburgh on June 1, 1982. Professor Hung, the noted Chinese scholar and historiographer, was the first president of Fellowship in Prayer. High-ranking administrators and members of the faculty who teach Chinese history, literature, and language at the University gathered for the dedication ceremony. The books were given to the University by Professor Francis Cleaves of Harvard University. Mrs. Ruth Crawford Mitchell, a close friend of Dr. Hung, whom he called his "American sister", presented an additional gift of poems that Dr. Hung had hand-brushed for her. Each guest at the ceremony was given a copy of *A Portrait of William Hung,* a special issue of *Fellowship in Prayer* published last May.

Emily Councilman

**Fellowship Trustee Attends Conference**

Mrs. Emily Councilman, a trustee of Fellowship in Prayer, attended the annual conference of the Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship's Southeast Chapter last July. SFF is an eclectic organization that Mrs. Councilman describes as combining traditional Christianity with a New Age outlook. Holistic health and psychic phenomena are the main interests of the SFF, and the workshops given at the conference addressed those concerns. The theme of this year's conference was "The Greatest Adventure". What is the greatest adventure? It's what lies ahead — for all of us, as SFF members believe.

Mrs. Councilman's favorite workshop was called "From the Heart: Making it Work," and focused on joy and laughter as a way of coping and making our lives work. As she said, the participants of that workshop all "shared the cosmic joke".

The highlight of the conference, according to Mrs. Councilman, was the session in which, with the help of music and poetry, the participants became healing channels for each other. This session reflected what she felt was the best part of the conference: individuals touching each other on a level of love, acceptance, and sharing. Three or four hundred people attended the conference, and it was all very personal; there was a feeling of community, Mrs. Councilman observed.

Emily Councilman, a free-lance writer of poetry, fiction, and devotional literature, has been a member of the Burlington, North Carolina

chapter of the Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship for some time. She holds local SFF meetings in her home and attends their Southeast Chapter conference every year. An active member of Fellowship in Prayer's Board of Trustees, she also hosts a prayer group in her home.

**Fellowship Visits Veterans' Hospital**

The goal of Fellowship in Prayer is to unite all faiths through their common belief in and practice of prayer. One way in which we are working toward this end is through our contact with prayer groups of all kinds all over the world.

One such group we met with last June was a weekly prayer break meeting held in the Veterans' Administration Hospital in Philadelphia. Nirbha Singh Khalsa, the most recent member of the Fellowship's Board of Trustees, spoke to the group gathered for this meeting at the invitation of Chaplain Hills Morris, the hospital's Christian and Jewish chaplain. Chaplain Morris had started the weekly fifteen-minute prayer break in May, 1981, for members of the hospital staff as well as the patients. It was so well received that the government now pays employees for the time they spend in the meeting.

The prayer break, which was broadcast throughout the hospital for the benefit of bedridden patients, opened with a message from Reverend Morris during which he read from the June issue of *Fellowship in Prayer.* He led the group in prayer for their friends, associates, and families, and, after a solo sung by a member of the staff, Mr. Khalsa spoke about prayer and meditation, concluding with a little of the Fellowship's history and its goals and purpose.

If you would like more information about prayer groups, we have a booklet containing guidelines for establishing such groups. This booklet is available from our office at 20 Nassau Street, Suite 250, Princeton, New Jersey 08540. We also can provide speakers to address or advise prayer groups, or to represent Fellowship in Prayer at convocations of like-minded organizations.

**Plans for Future Issues**

- A special issue of Prayerful Verse
- Report on the Conference on Christian and Buddhist meditation at Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado
- An article on poet Gary Snyder
- A special issue on the International Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-Ji Buddhist monastery in New York State
- Book reviews by Doris Donnelly
- More *Arcane Stories*
- An interview with Frederick Franck
- An article by John S.D. Glaus on Christina Rossetti
- Stories by Salmon Ryder, Elizabeth Socolow, and Jim Panos
- Brother David Steindl-Rast

MEDITATION

# On Happiness

HAPPINESS is taken here to mean a state or situation which we would like to see continue forever unchanged. This is what distinguishes happiness from pleasure, which is no more than a feeling that is agreeable but short and fleeting. Pleasure can never be a state, while it is possible to speak of a state of pain.

All men are one in their desire for happiness. Nature has made happiness a law of our being, and all that is not happiness is alien to our disposition. It alone has unmistakeable power over our hearts, it attracts us all through an instant inclination, a powerful charm, and an irrestistible attraction. Happiness is the charm and perfection of Nature and she has indelibly engraved it upon our hearts.

All men also agree on the nature of happiness which they identify with pleasure, or at least they agree that it owes to pleasure its greatest delight and stimulation. If happiness is not enlivened from time to time by pleasure, it is not so much true happiness as a state of tranquility, a very sorry kind of happiness indeed! If we are left in a state of lazy indolence that offers no stimulus to our activity, we cannot be happy; our desires can only be fulfilled by our being transported out of this listlessness in which we languish. Joy must flow into the innermost recesses of our hearts, it must be stimulated by pleasant feelings, kept in motion by gentle shocks, filled with delightful variety, it must intoxicate us with a pure pleasure that nothing can spoil. But man's condition does not allow for such a state: pleasures cannot accompany every moment of our life and the most delightful state includes many periods of languor; once the first flame of feeling has died down, the best we can hope for is tranquility. Our most perfect happiness in this life is only a state of tranquility *that is enlivened from time to time by moments of pleasure.*

Certainly anyone who preached that virtue was so rarified that it excluded all feelings of joy and pleasure would only repel our hearts. The heart opens only to pleasure, for only pleasure can reach all its secret recesses. We may possibly respect a virtue that is not accompanied by pleasure, but we will not be drawn to it. I admit that the same pleasure is not suited to all of us: some prefer vulgar pleasures, others the pleasures of refinement, some keen, others lasting pleasures, some sensual and others spiritual pleasures, and yet again some prefer the pleasure of feeling and others the pleasures of reflection. But all without exception seek pleasure.

— Abbe Pestre: Happiness (Encyclopedie 1765)

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# JOURNEY'S END

by MARY GILBERT

A quail calls from the still brush.
In the tracks of the nocturnal raccoon,
mist drips softly.

I focus on the part of
what's going on out there that's me:
I become part of the spirit of life.
The sun is lost in the leaden sky,
and the crocus blows
its bulbous, solitary flower.

The hunter stalks the woods.
A gunshot silences the quail,
and the tree falls that
once housed the raccoon.
And I help anoint the body of Christ
for burial.

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